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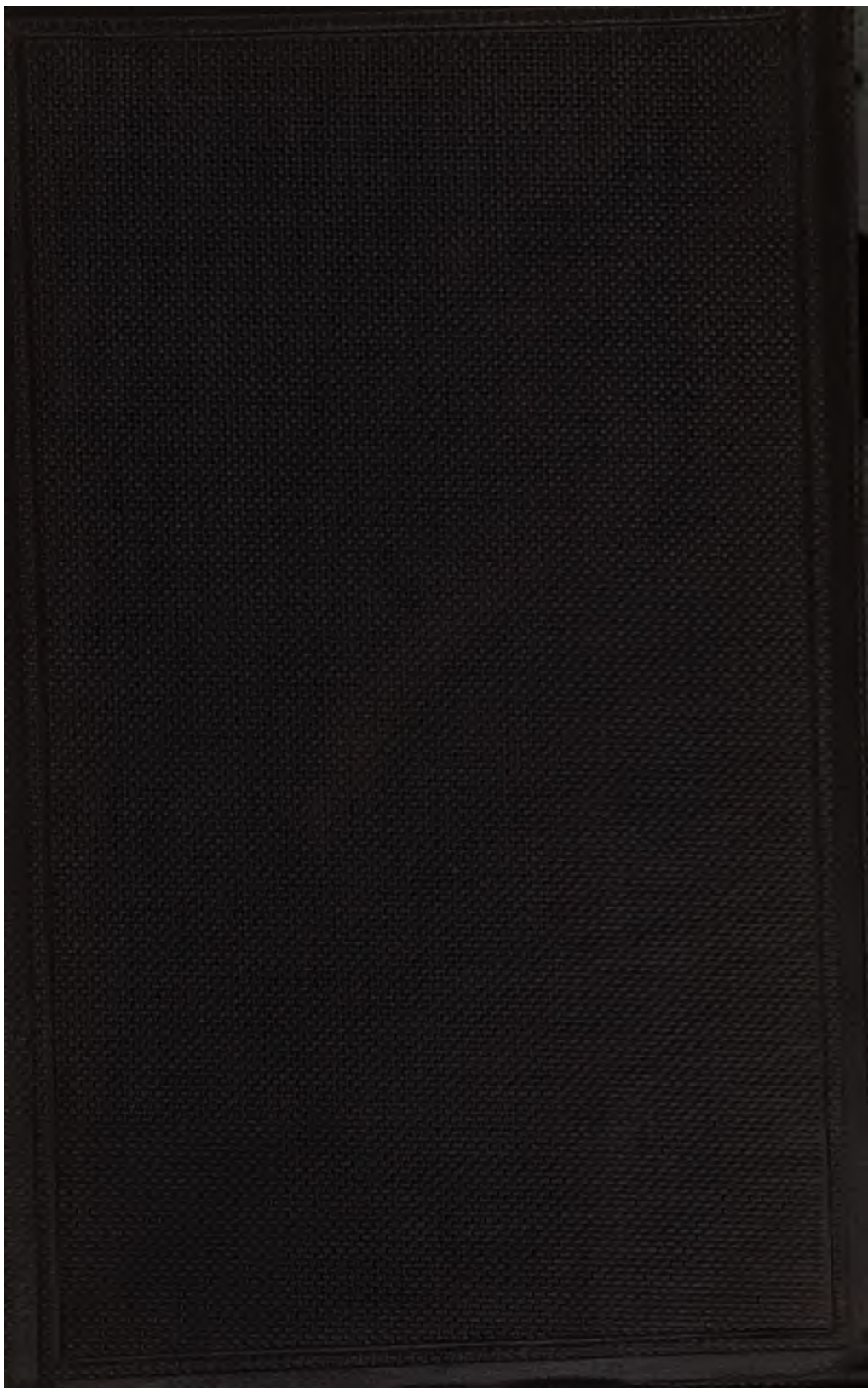
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A JEWISH REPLY
TO
DR. COLENSO'S
CRITICISM ON THE PENTATEUCH.

ISSUED BY THE
JEWISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE DIFFUSION OF
RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

LONDON:
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1865.

100. p. 114.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It had been originally the intention of the Association to give a general reply to the whole of Dr. Colenso's work; and considerable progress had been made in preparing a rejoinder to the second and third volumes.

It appeared, however, that the later volumes, containing matter which could scarcely attract the general reader, had not been very extensively read. The first volume contained by far the most important strictures upon the Pentateuch, and was written in so popular a style that it undoubtedly produced a remarkable effect upon the public mind,—an effect which the numerous rejoinders hitherto published have not yet removed.

It has, therefore, been deemed expedient to issue this reply to the first part alone; and it will be a matter for future deliberation whether the publication of a rejoinder to the later volumes be desirable.



PREFACE.

SUPPOSE that you had a friend whom you dearly loved and esteemed, a friend whom you had trusted all your life as your counsellor and guide, consoling you tenderly in times of adversity and sorrow, and admonishing you wisely in times of prosperity and joy,—a friend whom you believed to be the embodiment of truth, of virtue, and of wisdom. And suppose that one day you were told you had been grievously mistaken in this friend: that he had gone into a foreign land: that, there, some clever people had discovered him to be an impostor, who had built up his position upon falsehood and deceit, and that his impostures had been proved, beyond a doubt, by his own words and deeds.

You would be astounded at the mere idea of an imputation upon the character of such a friend. You would indignantly tell your informant that it was impossible; that no one should dare, in your presence, to breathe a

word of calumny against your dear friend, whose honour you were prepared to vindicate to the last drop of your blood.

Gradually, however, the foam of your indignation would subside, and the sense of a more serious and practical duty make itself felt. You would say, I will go abroad and see that my dear friend has fair play, that no doubtful evidence be taken against him, that his words, spoken in a tongue unfamiliar to his accusers, be not mis-interpreted, and that his actions be not misrepresented by those who do not understand the spirit of his pure life.

The BIBLE is this our friend ; to the Jew how great a friend, none but a Jew can tell. It has been his guide, his counsellor, his never-failing friend, endeared to him as the sole relic of the ancient glory of his race ; beloved as the great solace of his exile ; guarded as the mainspring of his dearest hopes on earth and in heaven.

Nor is this love a mere selfish love. For the Bible, which has been the friend of the Jew, has become the friend of the whole world ; and, devoutly believing himself to be accredited as its custodian, the Jew regards it as his duty to protect it, not merely for his own sake, but for the sake of humanity at large.

This friend, then,—this Bible—has gone abroad into foreign lands ; its influence has spread far and wide, and it has afforded, for ages, a standard of action for the

best and wisest of men. The virtues it teaches, the morals it inculcates, the precepts it enjoins, have formed the basis of the best codes of the civilized world, and taught men justice, charity, and love.

Suddenly, its character is assailed; its veracity is impugned. The accuser quotes the words of the Bible itself, as evidence against itself; strives to prove inconsistencies, incongruities, and contradictions, as the result; seeks to sap the foundation of the belief in its Divine origin by an appeal to its own facts.

The Bible, then, is on its trial, and ours is the task to defend it. It will be our duty to sift carefully the evidence of the assailant, to examine well the analogies on which he bases his attack, to see whether he correctly interprets the words of Holy Writ, whether he properly represents the spirit of the Sacred Volume. From such a trial we shall have nothing to fear for our Bible.

And here we may remark, that, to the Jew, the criticisms of Dr. Colenso present few points of novelty. Centuries ago, most of the difficulties raised by the bishop, and by the German critics whom he follows, were perceived by the authors of the Talmud and Midrashim, and by the later Jewish commentators; by Maimonides, Nachmanides, Ibn Ezra, Abarbanel, Isaac Arama, and others. These men were true biblical critics; but they did not criticise with an imperfect knowledge. They

were complete masters of the language—then still a living tongue—in which the Bible was written; and they were well acquainted with the ancient manners and local circumstances with which a large portion of the Bible History is connected. They brought to bear upon their work all the learning of the past, all the philosophy of their own times, and a thorough knowledge of the book itself. That learning, that philosophy, and that knowledge enabled them to explain every difficulty that criticism could raise; and the Bible came from their hands like gold from the furnace. To them it was indeed a well-tried friend, for they had tested it with their inexorable criticism, and had found it true and trustworthy.

And so, we feel assured, it will be found by the earnest and conscientious critic of the present day, when he conducts his criticism in a fair and proper spirit.

We shall endeavour in this rejoinder to indicate, rather than to assert dogmatically, the arguments which may be used in defence of the Bible. Many points of difficulty may admit of various answers, besides those which we shall venture to advance. The light of science is daily waxing brighter, and may, at some future time, render clear and lucid that which is now intricate and obscure.

What we shall say, then, we shall put forward with all humility, conscious of the imperfection of human

knowledge, mindful that the future must have a store of information greater than the past; but yet confident that the Bible will never be affected by time, that its teachings will be ever young, that its authority will be daily more and more acknowledged, and that the increasing wisdom of the world will but signify an approximation to the Divine truths of that Law which we devoutly believe to be the Word of the One True God.

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CHAPTER I.

DR. COLENZO'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IN this chapter, Dr. Colenso indicates how doubts as to the veracity of parts of the Pentateuch took possession of his mind, and gradually drove him to the conviction of the general unhistorical character of the Mosaic narrative.

He informs his readers that the arguments which led him to this conviction were derived, neither from occasional petty variations and contradictions, nor from the more formidable difficulties suggested by the accounts of the creation, the deluge, the standing-still of the sun, &c., nor by the apparent inconsistency of the Mosaic code with our natural ideas of justice and mercy ;¹ but that the conviction of the unhistorical character of the Pentateuch narrative was forced upon him by the consideration of the many "absolute impossibilities" and "manifest contradictions and inconsistencies" involved in the narrative.

These impossibilities, contradictions, and inconsistencies, he proposes to bring to light in the succeeding chapters ; and, meanwhile, he consoles his readers for the presumed inevitable loss of their beloved Bible as a Divine revelation, with the surmise that natural religion will prove all-sufficient. He tells us :—

¹ See chap. xxii.

"It is, perhaps, God's will that we shall be taught in this our day, among other precious lessons, not to build up our faith upon a Book, though it be the Bible itself, but to realise more truly the blessedness of knowing that He Himself, the living God, our Father and Friend, is nearer and closer to us than any book can be,—that His voice within the heart may be heard continually by the obedient child that listens for it, and *that* shall be our teacher and guide in the path of duty, which is the path of life, when all other helpers—even the words of the best of Books—may fail us."

Dr. Colenso concludes his introductory chapter by indicating the spirit in which he proposes to enter upon the subject, affirming that the spirit cannot be better described than in the words of Burgon :¹—

"Approach the volume of Holy Scripture with the same candour, and in the same unprejudiced spirit, with which you would approach any other famous book of high antiquity. Study it with, at least, the same attention. Give, at least, equal heed to *all* its statements. Acquaint yourself at least as industriously with its method and principle, employing and applying either, with at least equal fidelity in its interpretation. *Above all, beware of playing tricks with its plain language.* Beware of suppressing any part of the evidence which it supplies to its own meaning. Be truthful, and unprejudiced, and honest, and consistent, and logical, and exact, throughout, in your work of interpretation."

We venture to think that if Dr. Colenso had followed these instructions of Burgon, "THE PENTATEUCH AND BOOK OF JOSHUA CRITICALLY EXAMINED" would never have been published.

It may be well, before considering Dr. Colenso's work in detail, to understand clearly the conclusions to which it tends, so that we may duly estimate the importance of the present discussion.

¹ *Inspiration and Interpretation*, p. cxli.

It need scarcely be said that the questions, whether a certain genealogy as set forth in the Pentateuch be true or false, or whether certain numbers mentioned in the Holy Writ be accurate or not, are only so far of importance that they bear upon the historical veracity of the whole Pentateuch.

But a still larger question is at issue. If, as Dr. Colenso would wish us to believe, the history of the Pentateuch is false, we should be irresistibly led to the conclusion that its teachings are destitute of that Divine character which we have always attributed to them, and we should regard them with suspicion and distrust. The very foundation of Revelation—its history—being undermined, the whole structure would fall, and we should be left without a guide and without a standard, save that which unaided reason might afford.

This is the inevitable result,—a result which even Dr. Colenso would evidently fain avoid ; for, here and there, he makes a feeble attempt at proving that religious truth may, after all, be found in a book pronounced by him to be false, and asserts that he fully believes that the Mosaic narrative, with all the falsehood he would attribute to it, imparts to us “revelations of the Divine will and character.”

But, in truth, there can be no such compromise. Whatever impairs the credit of the Pentateuch as a narrative must impair its credit as a religious and moral code. Indeed, it is evident that Dr. Colenso himself does not believe in such a compromise ; for, in his concluding remarks,¹

¹ Chap. xxiii.

where he talks of filling up the void occasioned by the loss of revealed religion, all he can offer as a substitute is the prompting of the inner voice; and to show how all-sufficient this is, he gives a specimen of the truth taught by Cicero and by certain Sikh Goroos,—writers “who had no Pentateuch or Bible to guide them.”

Some of the sentiments of the writers quoted are very fine; and, indeed, we do not know whether they may not have been, in part, derived indirectly from the Bible. But others of these sentiments are far from being unexceptionable. In one place, for instance, a blind fatality is preached.¹ And whether the doctrine involved in the writings of these authors be good or bad, it must be admitted that the passages quoted deal in mere vague generalities, and inculcate no special duties. Even the noble words of Cicero, preserved by Lactantius² are open to this objection. Do they teach any one positive duty?

¹ “Whatsoever hath been made, God made. Whatsoever is to be made, God will make. Whatsoever is, God maketh. Then why do any of you afflict yourselves?”—§ 189.

² Law, properly understood, is no other than right reason agreeing with nature, spread abroad among all men, ever consistent with itself, eternal, whose office is to summon to duty by its commands, to deter from vice by its prohibitions,—which, however, to the good, never commands or forbids in vain, never influences the wicked either by commanding or forbidding. In contradiction to this law, nothing can be laid down, nor does it admit of partial or entire repeal. Nor can we be released from this Law, either by vote of the Senate or decree of the people. Nor does it require any commentator or interpreter besides itself. Nor will there be one law at Athens, and another at Rome, one now, and another hereafter: but one eternal, immutable, Law will both embrace all nations and at all times. And there will be one common Master, as it were, and Ruler of all, namely, God, the

Could such vague statements check the evil passions when really aroused ?

And even if the doctrines so quoted were unimpeachable, and if their origin could be proved to be quite independent of the Bible, there would still remain the undeniable fact, attested by history, that even the most enlightened and civilized nations were, in the absence of a Divine revelation, sunk in the depths of immorality. Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, when in the zenith of their worldly excellence and power ; when greatest in science, in literature, and in art ; when mightiest in statecraft and grandest in philosophy, were yet, with the exception, perhaps, of a few enlightened minds, plunged in abject superstition ; and deeds of shameful obscenity and immorality were, at times, practised by them in open day in the name of religion, and as a part of Divine worship.

The fact is that, as a rule, reason alone is powerless to restrain the evil passions of man, and the cravings of the heart. The "inner voice of conscience" would be mute, if conscience itself were not formed and educated by principles received from without. The imperfection of human nature, and the instability of human institutions and morals demand, for the guidance of man, such a permanent standard as that afforded by Divine Revelation. Of this standard Dr. Colenso would deprive us. He would either

Great Originator, Expositor, Enactor, of this Law ; which Law whoever will not obey, will be flying from himself, and, having treated with contempt his human nature, will in that very fact pay the greatest penalty, even if he shall have escaped other punishments, as they are commonly considered.—LACTANTIUS, *Div. Inst.* vi. 8.

leave us a revelation without its history—in which case the revelation, as such, would fall from sheer want of foundation—or he would leave us to that unaided reason, which, biassed, as it ever must be, by prejudice, passion, conventionalities, convenience, interest, or inclination, is neither a safe nor an unfailing guide, even with the best of men.

Seeing, then, that there can be no compromise, and that disbelief in the history of Divine revelation involves disbelief in the substance of that revelation, we can estimate the full import of the question now at issue. Not that the momentous conclusion to which Dr. Colenso's arguments point should in any way deter us from a candid and impartial inquiry, but, that in the prosecution of such an inquiry, we should be actuated by the right spirit of criticism.

But it will be seen that it will need a very heavy blow, a mighty array of indisputable facts, to overturn the belief in the Divine revelation, as recorded in the Pentateuch. The existence of the Jews at the present day, with all their special customs and observances—customs and observances commemorative of the events recorded in the Pentateuch—affords one of the strongest proofs of the truth of the history of revelation ; and the existence of the Pentateuch, handed down among the Jews, from father to son, as the pure and sacred expression of God's truth and God's will, is, of itself, strong evidence of the historical truth of the Pentateuch.

In spite of oppression and persecution, which would have trodden out the life of any other nation, the Jews still exist, dispersed far and wide, but everywhere distinguished by the same customs, customs all of which commemorate

facts narrated in the Pentateuch. And no slight argument in favour of the historical truth of the Pentateuch is drawn from the longevity of this people, and from the persistence, peculiar to themselves, with which they have adhered through all periods and in all climes, to one system of religious observances.

Can we imagine a system of observances, such as those of the Passover as now celebrated, to be based upon a mere myth? Or can we imagine a festival like the Feast of Tabernacles, as now observed amongst the Jews, founded upon a mere fable? If there had been no real Passover, no real exodus from Egypt, no real dwelling in booths in the wilderness, when or how could these commemorative observances have been instituted? And, if gratuitously instituted, how would they have been so implicitly and persistently observed, involving, as they undoubtedly do, considerable personal trouble and inconvenience? Can we imagine such a state of things, as an entire nation assembling for the first time, by common consent, to perform the Passover observances, as the celebration of an event of which they had just heard for the first time, or just found written in a book? Such a state of things would be impossible. Such observances, distinguished by absolute uniformity of practice, could only have originated in one way—viz., *in the event itself*. Each individual of every generation of Jews has received the traditions of these observances from his father. Could there have been a whole generation of fathers so unnaturally wicked as to have foisted upon a whole generation of children a falsehood, and to have told them to perpetuate a mere myth by a religious observance? Such a thing would be im-

possible : and if so, how else could the observances have originated but in the events themselves ?

This fact alone renders the truth of the Pentateuch in the highest degree probable ; for, no father would deceive his children in such a matter as religious truth ; so that the first generation of fathers who handed down the Pentateuch to their sons must themselves have been the witnesses of Divine revelation.

And, when to this is added the evidence afforded by the accomplishment of all which the Pentateuch foretold, it must be admitted that the veracity of the narrative of the Pentateuch is much more fully established than many facts of secular history which are universally admitted.

Whoever, therefore, commences to attack the veracity of the Pentateuch, must produce arguments supported by facts that are not merely probable, but absolutely certain. Not until a statement in the Pentateuch can be proved to be absolutely impossible, should we be asked to resign our belief in it. Mere improbability will not suffice, for it will be balanced by the still greater improbability that anything so well attested can be false.

Now Dr. Colenso seems to have admitted this principle ; for all his efforts are concentrated upon the attempt to prove that facts stated in the Pentateuch are incongruities, or inconsistencies, or impossibilities. Yet these attempts at certain proof teem with assumptions by no means warranted by the words of Scripture, nor to be fairly or reasonably deduced therefrom. Yet when a defender of the Pentateuch puts forth any hypothesis which would explain a difficulty, the author becomes

sternly and rigidly logical, and will admit nothing that is not clearly stated in the narrative.

Now it must be admitted that the *onus probandi* lies on the assailant. We, who believe that the Pentateuch is verily the word of God, true and faithful in every particular, are entitled to demand of the assailant, before yielding up our belief, clear and decisive proofs, founded upon facts and free from assumptions, however plausible.

Nor can we allow the critic to forget that in dealing with the Bible, he is not dealing with an ordinary history. The narratives contained in the Book are not a connected and systematic chronicle, homogeneous and complete in all its parts, such as we expect to find in the work of a modern historian ; but here and there are to be encountered long and unaccountable breaks which sever the narrative, and render it rather a series of episodes than a continuous history. For example, the Bible passes over in silence the transactions of about thirty-eight of the forty years during which the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, contenting itself with a mere catalogue of their successive encampments. Yet we may well imagine that such a period, during which a whole generation died out, must have been pregnant with events of the highest interest. Of these events we know nothing. For some reason, into which we cannot penetrate, the chain is broken, and a mere thread unites the parted links.

So, too, we frequently find events placed on record without regard to chronological succession. A narrative breaks off, and a genealogy is commenced ; then the long catalogue of names is carried on to a far distant date, and the narrative is resumed at a point far antecedent to the

close of the genealogy just chronicled. In all such cases the rules of modern criticism are totally inapplicable to the sacred history.

Again, we must not, in a critical examination of the Bible, be guided in our estimate of matters of ancient history by modern analogies, or presumed modern analogies. In three thousand years the distinctive features of places, the meanings of words, the modes of action, and the habits of thought, change.

As to the features of places, we know that many localities, now barren, were once fertile.¹

As to words, we cannot be too cautious in building up theories upon words whose true meanings may have been lost. Many learned treatises have been written upon the true nature and signification of a Greek particle, and the Greek language is a mere babe compared with the Hebrew. Can we, then, wonder that there should occur occasionally in the Bible words of doubtful meaning? When such words occur in the precepts, the Talmud, which indicates the mode of procedure by which those precepts were carried out in the days when many of its authors wrote, affords sufficient and trustworthy interpretation; but when such doubtful words occur in the narrative, there may be great difficulty in determining their correct signification.²

¹ We have no right to assume (Colenso, chap. xii.) that the Sinaitic wilderness of the Mosaic period was as barren as the Sinaitic desert of the present age.

² It is, therefore, clearly wrong to build up such an argument as that contained in Dr. Colenso's 9th chapter, "The Israelites armed," upon the very doubtful translation of a word like יָמָם found only three times in the whole Bible.

As to the modes of action, we have no right to argue by modern analogies. The mode of life in Biblical times was so simple as to bear no comparison with that of the present age, with all its acquired and conventional wants. It may have approximated more nearly to that of the nomadic tribes of the present day.¹

With regard to habits of thought, we have still less right to argue by modern analogy. They change in a century, in a generation, frequently in a decade. Nay, they vary according to our "stand-point," often depending upon whether we be plaintiffs or defendants, or indifferent witnesses.

In reading of a bull-fight, we experience a feeling of horror. The Spanish lady sees the matador gored with perfect equanimity. Again, we cannot understand, in these prosaic times, the chivalry of the middle ages. Many of the narratives of that period, if not well authenticated matters of history, would certainly seem "unhistorical." We cannot comprehend them, because our habits of thought have changed. Just as there is a *genius loci* appertaining to every place, there is, so to speak, a *genius seculi* appertaining to every age; and into this *genius*, this spirit, we must enter, before we can appreciate the tone of feeling then and there prevailing. By the light of this spirit all history must be read, sacred as well as profane.

We may find an application of this principle of criticism, in considering the remarks upon certain parts of the Mosaic slave-code, which Dr. Colenso has introduced into his first chapter.

¹ We can thus draw no analogy between the exodus of two million Israelites from Egypt and the imaginary exodus of a like number of Englishmen from London. (COLENSO, chap. xi.)

He quotes from the 21st chapter of Exodus :—

‘ If the master (of a Hebrew servant) have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, *the wife and her children shall be her master’s*, and he shall go out free by himself.’ Ex. xxi. 4 :

“The wife and children,” continues Dr. Colenso, “being placed under the protection of such other words as these :”

‘ If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. *Notwithstanding*, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for *he is his money*.’ Ex. xxi. 20, 21.

“I shall never,” exclaims Dr. Colenso,¹

“forget the revulsion of feeling, with which a very intelligent Christian native, with whose help I was translating these words into the Zulu tongue, first heard them as words said to be uttered by the same great and gracious Being, whom I was teaching him to trust in and adore. His whole soul revolted against the notion that the Great and Blessed God, the Merciful Father of all mankind, would speak of a servant or maid as mere ‘money,’ and allow a horrible crime to go unpunished, because the victim of the brutal usage had survived a few hours. My own heart and conscience at the time fully sympathised with his.”

Let us interpret these passages of Scripture in the right manner and spirit of criticism, and we shall find that, far from being a subject for “revulsion of feeling,” they afford a striking proof of the humanity of the Mosaic code, and of the goodness of the Lawgiver.

In reading the 21st chapter of Exodus, the command given in verse 4 must not be taken by itself, but must be interpreted in connection with the context, and with its recapitulation elsewhere. The law relating to the Hebrew slave is stated in Exodus in the following terms :—

‘ If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall

¹ Colenso, page 9.

serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door or unto the door-post, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.¹

Now, in the first place, we must consider that the only means whereby a Hebrew could become a slave were these. He must have been either a malefactor² or an insolvent.³ In neither of these cases was his servile condition a permanent one; for, in the seventh year his liberty was restored to him. But it frequently happened that the master assigned to his Hebrew slave a Canaanitish bondswoman, as a concubine, during the period of his servitude. The words of the Hebrew text (verse 4.) **אִשָּׁה לוֹ אֲשָׁר**, are in direct antithesis to those of the previous verse **אִם בָּעַל אִשָּׁה הוּא**; and the word **אֲשָׁר**, in verse 4, must therefore be rendered "woman," not "wife." The object of the master, in so assigning a Canaanitish woman to his Hebrew slave, would probably be the increase of his slave-gang. It would, in the eyes of the people of that age, have been an act of great injustice and hardship to the owner, if the Hebrew slave had been

¹ Exod. xxi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

² Exod. xxii. 3.

³ Lev. xxv. 39, 47.

permitted to take with him out of bondage the woman who was the master's absolute property, and the children, who, during the first years of their lives, must have entailed upon the slave-owner a large expense for maintenance without any corresponding profit.

In most cases, the tie uniting the Hebrew slave with the bondswoman would, doubtless, be so slender as to be severed without regret. But when the contrary was the case, when a true attachment had grown up between the Hebrew slave and the bondswoman assigned to him, and he had learnt to regard her as his wedded wife, and her children as his, the law humanely permitted the voice of Nature to be obeyed. He had to tell his master, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children ; I will not go out free.' Then his master had to bring him before the judges, who would investigate and determine whether the slave was subject to a prior claim upon his person ; and, if it were found that he was not claimed by any one as a husband, nor by a creditor as a chattel, nor by justice as a malefactor under a further sentence of servitude, then he was permitted to unite his destiny with that of the female slave, and with her be a slave for ever.¹

Imagine, for a moment, the law to have been otherwise. Imagine the Hebrew slave taking with him into liberty the Canaanitish bondswoman and four or five little children. First, it would have been an act of injustice to the master ; secondly, it would have been almost impossible that the husband, just manumitted, and having to

¹ More correctly, till the jubilee, at which epoch *all* slaves were manumitted.

rely wholly upon his own exertions, would have been able to provide adequately for such a family. If he had been enslaved as a debtor, he would, in all probability, again have sunk into penury, and again have to be sold to satisfy the demands of his creditor ; and if he had been previously enslaved as a malefactor, he would, in all probability, again have lapsed into crime, and have become again enslaved to meet the demands of justice.

There could have been no more merciful law than that which restored the slave to liberty unencumbered, and thereby rendered him capable of retrieving his position. And if we look to the recapitulation of this same ordinance in Deut. chap. xv., we shall see further the humane spirit of the law. The master is told, 'In the seventh year, thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress ; of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.'¹

Our Holy Law teaches here a lesson which England, with all her vaunted civilization, has yet to learn and apply :—that society owes a duty to the discharged prisoner, be he debtor or criminal,—the duty of affording him some assistance when set free, so that he may have it in his power to earn a livelihood by honest means.

We have next to consider Dr. Colenso's view of the 20th and 21st verses of Exodus xxi. We shall find that, by

¹ Deut. xv. 12, 13, 14.

blindly following the authorised English version, he has entirely misapprehended the meaning of the original text.

First, the word **בַּשֵּׁבֶט**, in Exod. xxi. 20, cannot be translated "with *a* rod," but "with *the* rod;" that is, with the instrument that was customarily used, and sufficient to bring a refractory slave to obedience, but not to injure him severely. If it were "*a* rod," the Hebrew word would be **שֵׁבֶט**. Secondly, **נָקָם נָקָם** does not signify, "he shall surely be punished;" but "it shall surely be avenged." Even though the master used a light instrument of punishment, if he carried the chastisement to such extremes that the servant died under his hands, capital punishment was to be inflicted upon him. This is the correct interpretation of the words **נָקָם נָקָם**. If a mere fine were to be the punishment, the words **עָנָשׁ יַעֲנֶשׁ** would have been used, as in verse 22.¹

The succeeding verse (21) is also wrongly rendered. It can only be translated, "But if he (the injured slave) stand one or two days;" that is, if he survive at least a day, "it shall not be avenged, for he is his (master's) money."² In this case, all the Bible tells us is, that the master was *not to be put to death*; assigning as a reason that the bondsman was his master's property. This bare fact was strong presumptive evidence that the master had not designed to inflict any serious injury upon the person

¹ Vide *Sanhedrin*, fol. 526. That the word **נָקָם** implies a punishment of the severest kind is amply proved by such passages as **חָרֵב נִקְמָת נָקָם בְּרִית** (Lev. xxvi. 25), **נָקָם נִקְמָת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** (Numb. xxxi. 2), &c.

² Vide *Nachmanides*, who asserts that the slave must have risen from his sick bed and *walked about* within that time.

of his slave, inasmuch as to have done so would have been to inflict a pecuniary injury upon himself.

And if the slave survived the punishment a day or two, it could not be asserted, with positive certainty, in the then state of science, that the death was the result of the chastisement.¹

If, on the other hand, the master used an instrument of punishment likely to produce fatal results (and not the light rod), he was put to death if the slave eventually died, even if the slave had survived the blow a considerable time.²

So much, then, for these particular articles of the Mosaic slave code. But the most superficial review of the laws appertaining to slavery will convince even the most prejudiced reader that a spirit of the purest humanity pervades them. Thus, in the same chapter, (xxi., ver. 26, 27), we read, that the master forfeited his slave if he deprived him of any member of his body, even of a tooth.

We find everywhere in the Pentateuch that, in religious matters, the slave was placed upon an equality with his master. The Sabbath was to be a Sabbath for the slave.³ The Passover, the great festival of freedom, was to be a festival to all alike—the slave included.⁴ The Feast of Tabernacles was to be a time of rejoicing for all, for the bondsman and bondswoman also.

Then look at the laws of the Mosaic code, concerning fugitive slaves, and contrast them with the same laws in

¹ Even, according to English law, "it is not homicide unless death takes place within a year and a day after the injury." *PENNY CYCLOPEDIA*, Art. "Murder."

² *MAIMONIDES*, *רוצח* הל' II. 14.

³ *Exod. xx. 10*, *Deut. v. 14*.

⁴ *Deut. xvi. 11*.

the most merciful slave-holding states of ancient or modern times. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best ; thou shalt not oppress him."¹ Will such a law be found in the code of any other nation that ever recognized slavery ?

Let us further contrast the state of the slave living under the Mosaic code with that of his contemporary, the slave of Egypt. In Egypt, the life of a slave was as little valued as that of an insect. The mere sound of the words (whatever meaning may then have been connected with them), that if a master take the life of a slave "it shall surely be avenged," must have appeared to the hearer of those times the sublimest revelation of liberty. The contrast between slavery under the old system, and slavery under the Mosaic code, must have been such, that the words of the law which gave protection to the slave must have sounded in his ears almost as sweetly as the trumpet of the Jubilee, which made him and his children free men. Under the Mosaic dispensation, though a slave, he was recognized as a man, enjoying many legal rights in common with the highest in the land. The tribunal of justice, before which the High Priest had to appear, was the same tribunal which tried the slave.

But the contrast need not be confined to slavery contemporaneous with the Mosaic dispensation, for it will be found equally striking when we note the position of the

¹ Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

slave in later times. Aristotle defines a slave to be "a living, working tool and possession." The Greek slave was not believed upon his oath, and his evidence in courts of justice was never taken without torture. In Rome, the slave was looked upon as a thing, not as a person ; his master could use him as he pleased. Under the Roman republic, the law did not, in any manner, protect the person or life of slaves. Their offences were punished with severity, and frequently with the utmost barbarity. A common punishment was to hang them up by their hands, with weights suspended to their feet. Any one who protected or concealed a fugitive slave was punished as a thief.

We have already shown how mild was the Mosaic slave code, and if we need a proof that it was obeyed in all its leniency, we may find it in the fact, that there does not exist on record a single case of insurrection of slaves among the Israelites. We know how prevalent were such occurrences among the Greeks and Romans. With the Israelites, the slave could scarcely be considered a slave, as we understand the term. His condition rather resembled that of a vassal.

With what deep veneration would that Zulu have regarded the Holy Book, if the Bishop, who had been sent to teach him, had, instead of violently wrenching a few distorted words from their context, laid open before him the whole slave-code, as given by the Almighty to His people and to the world ; contrasted its principles and practices with those of other codes, and so led him to see the beauty, humanity, and perfection of the Divine Law ; if he had shown him, further, the laws relating to the treatment of the widow and the orphan, of the poor

and despised, of the very Egyptian, descended from the cruel taskmasters of the Israelites !

How soon would the "revulsion of feeling" have disappeared, and have given place to the profound conviction, that that code of mercy, of charity, of justice, and of humanity, which constituted (without ostentatiously proclaiming itself as such), a true *religion of love*,¹ was indeed an emanation from the "Great and Blessed God, the Merciful Father of all mankind !"

¹ Singularly enough, Dr. Colenso, in more than one place, claims for Christianity the introduction of the doctrine "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He writes § 492, "It was said to them of old, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine *heart*, with all thy *soul*, and with all thy *strength*,' Deut. vi. 5. It is Christianity which adds, 'and with all thy *mind*, and thy neighbour as thyself,' Luke x. 27." Again, in § 540, after quoting the words of Deut. vi. 4, 5, he designates them as "words which one greater than Moses declared to contain the essence of all the Law and the Prophets, adding to them the *new* (!) command of the Gospel 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' Matt. xxii. 37—39.

Has Dr. Colenso ever read the 19th chapter of Leviticus ? for there he will find (verse 18) the identical command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The world had not to wait for Christianity to propound this law as a new doctrine. The world received it from Sinai, amid a host of other laws, all instilling the same principle—the principle of social virtue ; all breathing the same spirit—the spirit of universal love.

CHAPTER II.

THE FAMILY OF JUDAH.

DR. COLENZO'S first difficulty is based upon Gen. xlv. 12, in which the descendants of Judah, who went down into Egypt with Jacob, are enumerated in the following words :—

“And the sons of Judah : Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah ; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan : and the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul.”

Dr. Colenso endeavours to show, upon very doubtful evidence, that Judah could not have been more than forty-two years of age, at the time of the migration to Egypt. He then states that, according to the representations of the Bible, the following events took place within these forty-two (?) years of Judah's life.

“(i) Judah grows up, marries a wife—‘at that time,’ *v.* 1, that is, after Joseph's being sold into Egypt, when he was seventeen years old,’ Gen. xxxvii. 2, and when Judah, consequently, was at least *twenty* years old,—and has, separately, three sons by her.

“(ii) The eldest of these three sons grows up, is married, and dies.

“The second grows to maturity (suppose in another year), marries his brother's widow, and dies.

“The third grows to maturity (suppose in another year still), but declines to take his brother's widow to wife.

“She then deceives Judah himself, conceives by him, and, in due time, bears him twins, Pharez and Zarah.

"(iii) One of these twins also grows to maturity, and has two sons, Hezron and Hamul, born to him, before Jacob goes down into Egypt."

Whereupon he remarks—

"The above being certainly incredible, we are obliged to conclude that one of the two accounts must be untrue."

One of the accounts certainly is untrue ; not the biblical account, but some or all of Dr. Colenso's assumptions. He assumes that Judah did not marry before the age of twenty, basing this assumption upon the statement of Gen. xxxviii. 1, where, immediately after the narration of the selling of Joseph (at the age of seventeen years), Judah (whom he assumes to have been only three years older than Joseph),¹ is stated to have married "at that

¹ This he attempts to prove as follows:—

"Joseph was thirty years old when he 'stood before Pharaoh,' as governor of the land of Egypt, G. xli. 46; and from that time nine years elapsed (seven of plenty and two of famine), before Jacob came down to Egypt. At that time, therefore, Joseph was thirty-nine years old. But Judah was about three years older than Joseph; for Judah was born in the *fourth* year of Jacob's double marriage, G. xxix. 35, and Joseph in the *seventh*, G. xxx. 24—26, xxxi. 41. Hence Judah was forty-two years old when Jacob went down to Egypt."

It will be at once seen that Dr. Colenso here actually *assumes* that Judah was only three years older than Joseph; for he assumes that Joseph was born in the *seventh* year of Jacob's double marriage,—a very doubtful fact, by no means a consequence of the narrative, but rather opposed to it. It is true that Jacob tells Laban that he has served him twenty years, fourteen for his daughters, and six for the cattle; but he does not say that the six years began directly that the fourteen were at an end. It is hardly credible that Jacob would have desired to return home empty-handed, and there was probably an interval which elapsed after the fourteen years, and during which interval he was his own master, and acquired

time." He further assumes that twenty was the general age of puberty in the East at that period.

As to the first assumption, we say that the expression "at that time" (בְּעֵת הַהִיא) cannot here imply literally that the events related in chapter xxxviii. occurred after those described in chapter xxxvii., and before those related in chapter xxxix.; for chapter xxxvii. describes how Joseph was sold by his brethren; and chapter xxxix. how he was brought by his purchasers to Egypt. Between these two events, occupying at most but a few weeks, all the occurrences related in the intermediate chapter (xxxviii.) could not possibly have taken place. We are, therefore, compelled by the context to ignore here all idea of chronological sequence, and to understand that the phrase "at that time" (בְּעֵת הַהִיא), embraces a wide period. All that is fairly implied is, that the events related in chapter xxxviii commenced when Jacob was already sojourning "in the land wherein his father was a

sufficient possessions to induce him to think of returning to his own country. Dr. McCaul (*Examination of Bishop Colenso's Difficulties*) ingeniously shows that the narrative of the birth of Jacob's children needs and supports this hypothesis of an extension of time. He shows that it would be difficult to imagine Gad and Asher, the two sons of Zilpah (Leah's handmaid), and Issachar, Zebulon, and Dinah, Leah's own children, all to have been born within three years, which would have been the case if only three years intervened from the birth of Judah to that of Joseph. We are told (Gen. xxix. 35) that, after the birth of Judah, Leah "left bearing;" but she could scarcely be said to have "left bearing," if she gave birth to three children in the three following years. These facts point to the conclusion that considerably more than three years elapsed from the birth of Judah to that of Joseph, so that Judah would have been much more than forty-two years of age at the time of the migration to Egypt.

stranger," and were being enacted contemporaneously with the events of Joseph's life.¹

With regard to the assumption that the age of puberty was about twenty, it is sufficiently well known that, in the East, boys and girls of twelve years of age not only marry, but have children at the usual period after marriage. Thevenot, in his travels,² states that, among the Indians, there are found fathers at the age of ten.³

Now, taking for granted, for a moment, Dr. Colenso's assumption that Judah was only three years older than Joseph, and, therefore, forty-two years old at the time of the migration, we propose to show that all the events, stated to have occurred, might have occurred within the forty-two years.

Suppose that Judah married when he was 12 years of age; that his son Er was born when he was 13 years of age; that his son Onan was born when he was 14 years of age; and that his son Shelah was born when he was 15 years of age.

Suppose next that Er married Tamar when he was 12, and when Judah would consequently be 25; that Er died

¹ As an example of the extended meaning to be attributed to the phrase "at that time," we may (following Ebn Ezra) quote Deut. x. 8., where we read, "At that time (בְּזֶמַן הַהוּא) the Lord separated the tribe of Levi." In the preceding verse we are told that the Israelites encamped at Jotbath,—an event which occurred in the fortieth year of the wanderings, while the separation of the tribe of Levi took place in the second month of the second year after the exodus.

² Vol. iii., p. 165.

³ See, also, in proof of the physiological fact of early puberty in the East, "Kuppel's Nubians," p. 42, "Kuppel's Abyssinians," I. 201, and "Hymer's Beobachtungen," II., p. 312.

just after his marriage;¹ and that, after the lapse of a year, Onan, who would then be 12, married Tamar.² At this time, Judah would be 26. From Gen. xxxviii. 9, 10, it is evident that Onan died immediately after his marriage. It also appears that Tamar, the widow of Er and Onan, was then requested to wait till Shelah had reached puberty; that she waited, but finding that there was no intention of marrying her to Shelah, she deceived Judah, as related in chap. xxxviii. 14, 15, and the result was the birth of Perez and Zarah. Allow that she waited one year, by which time Shelah would have been marriageable, and that another year elapsed before the birth of the twins, Perez and Zarah. By this time Judah would have been 28. Suppose, again, that Perez married at 12, and that his two sons, Hezron and Hamul, were born to him by the time he was 14 years old, Judah would then have been only 42, the age which Dr. Colenso makes him at the time of the migration to Egypt.

There is nothing *impossible* in these calculations. Dr. Colenso will, no doubt, say that they are so improbable as to border closely upon an impossibility; yet, even admitting this, we have done enough if we have demonstrated the mere *possibility* of the events recorded having happened within the period stated.

But, it will be seen that the fact once admitted that Judah and Er might have married at 12, everything else follows quite as a matter of course; for, it having been deemed in the East a duty to marry the widow of a de-

¹ Gen. xxxviii. 7.

² Gen. xxxviii. 8.

ceased brother, the consecutive marriages would follow with all possible speed.

In the above calculations, an entire year has been, in every case, allowed after marriage for the birth of a child, when nine months might have been sufficient. Again, two whole years have been allowed from the marriage of Perez for the birth of Hezron and Hamul, when they might possibly have been twins; in which case, nine months would have been sufficient instead of two years.

It would thus have been quite within the range of *possibility* for Hezron and Hamul to have been born when Judah was between 39 and 40 years old, so that, in reality, so far from our calculations involving a very close escape from an impossibility, we have two or three years to spare.

If, moreover, Judah was more than three years older than Joseph (as we have shown in the footnote to page 32 to be highly probable), the alleged difficulty vanishes altogether.

In giving this reply to Dr. Colenso's objection, we claim no originality. Ebn Ezra, a Jewish author, who lived in the thirteenth century, and wrote a most valuable commentary upon the sacred volume, plainly puts forth this "difficulty" as to the family of Judah, and answers it in the manner we have shown. He further sagaciously remarks upon the words *בְּעֵת הַהִיא* "at that time," that the holy penman must have placed the events recorded in chap. xxxviii., out of their proper chronological order, so as to afford a powerful contrast between the character of Judah and his family, and the character of Joseph, as related in the succeeding chapter.

It may be well, also, to remark that Dr. Colenso's objections as to the genealogy of Judah are not even new to English literature. Two hundred and thirty-nine years ago, the same difficulty was raised and answered by Henry Ainsworth, in his *Annotations upon the First Book of Moses*. 1626.

CHAPTER III.

THE EXPLANATIONS OF EXPOSITORS CONSIDERED.

WE pass over this chapter of Dr. Colenso's work, as it contains no objections to the facts of the Pentateuch itself, but only criticisms upon the explanations of the preceding difficulty given by Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Hävernick, and others.

Dr. Colenso, the prosecutor, reserves to himself the right of choosing what witnesses may be called for the defence of the Bible, and, having heard the evidence of these select witnesses, takes a delight in upsetting their theories, and then chuckles over his easy conquest. But would it not have been more fair and reasonable in an inquirer after truth, to have studied and considered in this, and indeed in every other instance of difficulty and doubt, *all* expositors and commentators who preceded him? Would it not have been more especially desirable to have consulted those ancient and modern Hebrew expositors who were naturally far more familiar than himself with the language and style of the Bible, and who had made its study the business of their lives? Could Dr. Colenso, a novice in Hermeneutics, and a still greater novice in the Hebrew language, learn absolutely nothing from such authorities?

CHAPTER IV.

THE SIZE OF THE TABERNACLE COMPARED WITH THE
NUMBER OF THE CONGREGATION.

DR. Colenso quotes the following passage from Lev. viii. 1—4 : “And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, ... Gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Dr. Colenso tells us that the entire width of the tabernacle was 18 feet, and says :—

“Allowing two feet in width for each full-grown man, nine men could just have stood in front of it. Supposing, then, that ‘all the congregation’ of adult males in ‘the prime of life had given due heed to the Divine summons, and had hastened to take their stand, side by side as closely as possible, in front, not merely of the *door*, but of the *end* of the Tabernacle, in which the door was, they would have reached, allowing 18 inches between each rank of nine men, for a distance of more than 100,000 feet,—in fact, nearly *twenty miles*.”

He further explains, that, before they could have stood at the door of the tabernacle, they must have stood in the court of the tabernacle ; that, as the space available in the court was only 1,692 square yards, it could not have held more than 5,000 men, whereas the able-bodied men alone exceeded 600,000.

He concludes by saying :—

"It is inconceivable how, under such circumstances, 'all the assembly,' 'the whole congregation,' could have been summoned to attend 'at the door of the tabernacle' by the express command of Almighty God."

So it is. Quite inconceivable, if we take Dr. Colenso's interpretation.

Everything depends upon the meaning of the Hebrew words in the original text. The words translated as "all the congregation," are **אֶת כָּל הָעֵדָה**. The words "and the assembly was gathered together" stand in the original, **וַתִּקְהַל הָעֵדָה**; so it appears that the English version renders **עֵדָה** indifferently by the words "congregation" and "assembly."

The real meaning of **עֵדָה** is "an appointed assembly,"¹ consisting of representatives of the people, and *not* the entire mass of the people, which is termed **קָהָל** or **עַם**.

That the word **עֵדָה** does not generally mean the entire population, may be proved by examining those passages of the Pentateuch where reference is unquestionably made to the whole population. In such cases, we shall find that the word **עֵדָה** is *not* used, but either **בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** (children of Israel), **כָּל עֵדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** (the whole congregation of the children of Israel), or, more frequently, **עַם** (people). In the narrative of the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, in which the whole nation took part, the first and third of these phrases are used, the word **עֵדָה** never. In the account of the wanderings² of the children

¹ Vide KIMCHI, ספר השׁרשים "Radicum Liber."

² Exod. xvi. 1, xvii. 1. Numb. xx. 12, xxxiii. 5.

of Israel, in which, without doubt, all the nation took part, the first two of the above phrases only are used. In the narrative of the revelation on Mount Sinai, at which the whole population were present, the words **עַם** (people), and **כָּל הָעָם** (all the people), are used eleven times¹—the word **עֵדָה** not once. Again, in a command precisely parallel to that cited by Dr. Colenso, where we read, “Gather the *people* together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear,” &c.,² and where the whole context implies that the entire population was included in the mandate, the phrase is not **הִקְהֵל אֶת הָעֵדָה**, but **הִקְהֵל אֶת הָעָם**.

The history of Korah’s rebellion³ affords an illustration of the view we have here taken as to the signification of **עֵדָה**. In the 2nd verse of the chapter, we see that the 250 “men of renown” who joined the rebellion were **נְשִׂאֵי עֵדָה** “princes of the assembly.” Throughout the narrative, Korah’s company is called **עֵדָה**, and Korah claims for the whole assembly (**עֵדָה**)⁴ the rank of priesthood, which would have been an absurd claim if **עֵדָה** meant the entire population. In the 19th verse, Korah is said to gather the congregation (or assembly, **עֵדָה**) at the door of the tabernacle. God threatens to consume the whole **עֵדָה**, but Moses intercedes. Then God says, “Speak unto the congregation (**עֵדָה**), get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan and Abiram,” whereupon, not the whole population, but the “elders of Israel” follow him.

¹ Exod. xix. 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, xx. 18, 21.

² Deut. xxxi. 12.

³ Numb. xvi.

⁴ Numb. xvi. 3.

The narrative describes the destruction of Korah and his friends, and finishes with the words "and they perished from among the congregation."¹ But, here, congregation evidently means the entire population, and hence the words are וַיִּאָבְדוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה not וַיִּאָבְדוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקָּהָל. In the next verse² is described the general panic which followed the earthquake, and the words used are, "*And all Israel* that were round about them fled at the cry of them," and, as might be expected, the word עֵדָה is not used.

It will be evident, from the examples adduced, that the word עֵדָה is limited to a representative assembly of the people, and cannot refer to the whole population.

There may be a few cases where the word עֵדָה is not restricted; but where a word of this kind has a double signification, we must be guided as to its meaning by the context.

Hence we conclude, (and there is nothing in the text cited to contradict the conclusion), that the command,³ which is the subject of Dr. Colenso's objection, applied not to the whole people, but to a representative assembly. These would congregate inside the court in front of the door of the tabernacle, and there would be ample room for such an "appointed assembly."

¹ Numb. xvi. 33.

² Numb. xvi. 34.

³ Lev. viii. 1, 4.

CHAPTER V.

MOSES AND JOSHUA ADDRESSING ALL ISRAEL.

DR. COLENZO quotes from Deuteronomy and Joshua the following passages :—

“ These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel.” Deut. i. 1.

“ And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them.” Deut. v. 1.

“ And afterward he read all the words of the Law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.” Jos. viii. 34, 35.

He then states, that “all Israel” comprised certainly not less than two millions of souls, most probably a still larger number.

“How then is it conceivable,” asks he, “that a man should do what Joshua is here said to have done, unless, indeed, the reading every ‘word of all that Moses commanded,’ with the blessings and cursings,’ according to all that is written in the book of the Law,’ was a mere dumb show, without the least idea of those most solemn words being *heard* by those to whom they were addressed ? For, surely, no human voice, unless strengthened by a miracle of which the Scripture tells us nothing, could have reached the ears of a crowded mass of people as large as the whole population of

London. The very crying of the 'little ones,' who are expressly stated to have been present, must have sufficed to drown the sounds at a few yards' distance."

The quotations from Deuteronomy tend so little to Dr. Colenso's purpose, that he himself lays but little stress upon them; but he evidently imagines, that, in Joshua, he has really caught the Bible asserting a positive impossibility. Here, again, an unwarrantable assumption forms the basis of his arguments.

Contrary to all analogy, he assumes that any acts ascribed to a leader must have been actually performed by the leader himself, in his own person, and unaided by any one else. If the words, "Joshua read," be taken to imply that he himself, personally and unaided, read the Law so as to be heard by all the congregation, why should not also the immediately preceding words, "then Joshua built an altar," imply that the leader actually did the work of a common mason, and built an altar with his own hands, while his people idly looked on? The altar must have been of considerable size, for it was large enough to have "a copy of the law" written on it. And do the words, "and he wrote," necessarily imply that he, with his own hands, performed the laborious task of writing every word himself?

Joshua, no doubt, actually read the law "before all the congregation," but not necessarily without assistance. Even his own unaided voice might well have been heard by a large proportion of the people; for, as Dr. McCaul remarks, no amphitheatre could have been more favorably arranged for the distribution of sound than the place selected for the reading of the Law—the plain

between Ebal and Gerizim. The bases of the two mountains almost touch. Joshua, standing in the narrow valley, and addressing an eager throng crowding the slopes of the two mountains,¹ tier above tier, could have been heard by thousands; for we are told by travellers of the present day how the voice can be heard from the very summit of Ebal to that of Gerizim.²

If, however, we refer to Deut. xxvii. 14, 15, where Moses charges the people as to the ceremony to be performed by them at Ebal and Gerizim, on entering the Land of Promise, we shall find that at least in the most important part of the proceedings—the pronouncing of the blessings and curses—the Levites certainly assisted. Moses there says, “And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image,” &c., &c. We may, therefore, conclude that Joshua merely took the lead in these proceedings, and that his voice, aided by the voices of 8,580³ Levites, did not require to be “strengthened by a miracle” to be heard by two millions of people.

But we are not positively bound to believe that because Joshua, assisted by the Levites, read the words of the

¹ Josh. viii. 33.

² “STANLEY’S Sinai and Palestine.”

³ There were 8,580 ministering Levites at the first numbering, (Numb. iv. 47, 48). On the occasion in question, the Levites, who spoke the awful words “with a loud voice,” were no doubt limited to those who were either priests, or who assisted in the service of the tabernacle: viz., those from the ages of 30 to 50, for we find them there called (Josh. viii. 33) “the priests, the Levites.” The tribe of Levi (non-ministering Levites) were stationed on Mount Gerizim among those who were to bless the people.

Law "before all the congregation," every individual heard them, then and there. If only a tenth part of of the assembled people heard them, and if only 200,000 voices gave response to the fearful curses threatened to the disobedient, it must, as Dr. McCaul truly remarks, have been a terrible spectacle, even to those who could not hear the "words of the Law:" the 'Amen' of so many thousands, echoing and re-echoing from hill-side to hill-side, must have sounded like an unearthly thunder; and if nine-tenths of the spectators heard nothing but the responses, they would not long remain without learning from those who did hear, what was the import of the words which had produced so profound an impression. Or, the ceremony over, they would quickly descend into the valley, and there read from the stones "all the words of the law."¹

How Moses addressed "all Israel," we know from the words of the Bible itself. There was an organized system of communication between Moses and his people by means of the elders; and as such an organization existed, and in time became a matter of course, it was quite unnecessary to make special reference to it, upon every occasion when Moses addressed them.

We find such a system of communication frequently alluded to. Thus, when God commands Moses and Aaron to speak to all the congregation of Israel, and to command them to slay the paschal lamb,² they merely call upon the elders and deliver to them the Divine command.³ When

¹ Deut. xxvii. 8.

² Exod. xii. 3.

³ Ibid. xii. 21.

Moses is instructed to proclaim to the people their high mission, to be "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation,"¹ he merely convenes the elders,² and delivers to them the message of God.

So, too, when Moses commands the performance of the ceremony of Ebal and Gerizim, we find that he, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people,³ and that "Moses and the priests, the Levites, spake unto all Israel."⁴ Again, we find that when Moses wrote the beautiful song, which was to be his death song, he taught it to the children of Israel.⁵ How he taught it is plainly shown in the 28th verse of the 31st chapter of Deuteronomy, where Moses says, 'Gather unto me all the *elders* of your tribes and your *officers*, that I may speak these words in their ears.'

If the Pentateuch is unhistorical because Dr. Colenso cannot understand how Moses communicated the Divine will to two millions of people, every history which relates how a general addressed his army is equally unhistorical.

But Dr. Colenso, though so fond of adhering to the letter of the Pentateuch, when convenient to him, is not so particular when a deviation from both the letter and the spirit will suit his purpose. In order to enhance the imaginary difficulty, Dr. Colenso does not hesitate to assert that the reading took place *on the same day* as the writing. The words in the text are, "and afterward Joshua read," &c., not "on the self-same day Joshua read." Such misrepresentation is in the highest degree culpable.

¹ Exod. xix. 6.

² Ibid. xix. 7.

³ Deut. xxvii. 1.

⁴ Ibid. xxvii. 9.

⁵ Ibid. xxxi. 22.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXTENT OF THE CAMP COMPARED WITH THE PRIEST'S DUTIES AND THE DAILY NECESSITIES OF THE PEOPLE.

IN this chapter, Dr. Colenso tells his readers that "it is our duty to look plain facts in the face."

The following are the "plain facts" with which he amuses his readers. He tells them that the camp of the Israelites in the wilderness must have occupied at least three square miles, but that, in all probability, it occupied about twelve miles square.

He tells them that by the sacrificial laws in Lev. iv. 11, 12, and Lev. vi. 10, 11, the offal and ashes of the sacrifices having to be carried forth "without the camp," the distance they would have to be conveyed would be about six miles, and, therefore, we must imagine the priest himself having to carry on his back, on foot, from St Paul's to the outskirts of the metropolis, "the skin and flesh, and head, and legs, and inwards, and dung, even the whole bullock." He tells his readers further, that all this had to be done by the priest himself; and that there were only three priests, Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar, and no more.

He states, further, that under the law, as laid down in Deut. xxiii. 12—14, all persons were obliged to go out-

side the camp for the necessities of nature, and innocently suggests to his readers, that there were "aged, and infirm, women in child-birth, sick persons, and young people, who could not have done this."

"The supposition involves, of course, an absurdity," says Dr. Colenso ; and upon this point we quite agree with him. But we deny his premises. We too, find it our duty to "look plain facts in the face," and we shall then find the "plain facts" to be absurd fictions, created by the fancy of the critic. Dr. Colenso thinks it likely that the whole camp covered an extent of twelve miles. We do not object to this dimension ; but the camp was not, as he surmises, a compact square of twelve miles long and twelve miles broad, but a space of irregular shape, with intervening spots of open ground between the encampments of the various tribes. In the centre was the Tabernacle, around which the Levites were commanded to pitch their tents. On the four sides of this central camp were to be pitched four other encampments, each extending over about three miles. Thus, instead of going six miles to carry their refuse, each tribe would have to go but a short distance outside its own camp. But it must not be imagined that the command to have a place outside the camp for the necessities of nature, applied to the general community. If we refer to the ordinance,¹ we find that it alludes especially and exclusively to the sanitary arrangements of the army, "when the host goeth forth against thine enemies."² Indeed, Dr. Colenso himself stumbles over this truth, when he reminds himself of

¹ Deut. xxiii. 12—14.

² Deut xxiii.9.

the "paddle" being upon the "weapon," thereby indicating that the rule in question was only to apply to the encampment of an army on active service.

Of the priest's duties we shall hereafter speak more fully, and shall show that the bulk of the sacrificial laws were not intended to be carried into practice during the wanderings in the wilderness. But let us assume that the especial offerings, which form the subject of Dr. Colenso's "critical examination," were actually performed in the wilderness. Do the absurdities which he points out inevitably follow? Were there only three priests, as he tells us? Did one of these three priests have to carry a whole bullock "on his back," a distance of six miles, as Dr. Colenso would make the Bible assert?

As to the number of the priests, the Bible is silent. But we know that there were more than the three enumerated by Dr. Colenso. We know that Eleazar had a son named Phinehas; and both he and Ithamar, most probably, had several sons. The name of Phinehas is only incidentally mentioned in an early genealogy,¹ and in connection with an episode which had no reference to the priestly calling.² But for this, we might have been ignorant of the existence of a priest named Phinehas; and, in like manner there might have been many more descendants and contemporaries of Aaron, whose names are not mentioned.

But however few, or however numerous, were the priests, there is nothing in the facts quoted, to indicate that the actual drudgery of carrying forth the whole bullock, or

¹ Exod. vi. 25.

² Numb. xxv. 7.

the ashes of the burnt offering, was performed by the priest himself. The words of the Hebrew text are **וְהוֹצִיא אֶת הַדָּשָׁן** and **וְהוֹצִיא אֶת כָּל הָאֵשׁ**. These words, literally translated, are, "and he shall cause the bullock to go forth," and "he shall cause the ashes to go forth." There is nothing to imply that the priest did this drudgery himself. He might have called to his aid any of the 2,750 Kohathites,¹ who were appointed to assist Aaron and his sons in their priestly office. In the service assigned to the sons of Kohath², during the march through the wilderness, it is particularly mentioned, "And they shall take away the ashes from the altar."³

Nor need it be supposed that the "clean place without the camp" was, of necessity, beyond the general encampment. It might have been, and no doubt was, immediately outside the camp of the Levites, no great distance for the bullock, or for the ashes, to be carried.

To prove that the word **וְהוֹצִיא** does not imply the personal service of the priest, let us take other examples of its use. God commanded Moses **וְהוֹצִיא אֶת הַמְּקַל**,⁴ which is translated in the English version, "Bring forth him that hath cursed." Was it intended that Moses himself was to carry him on his back? We find what was implied by the sequel; for we read that Moses spake to the children of Israel, **וַיֹּצִיא אֶת הַמְּקַל**,⁵ "that they should bring forth him that had cursed."⁶

Again, in the command for the destruction of the

¹ Numb. iv. 36.

² Numb. iv. 13.

³ See also 'Joma,' p. 53.

⁴ Lev. xxiv. 14.

⁵ Lev. xxiv. 23.

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leprous¹ house, the priest is ordered to "break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house, and he shall carry them forth (וְהוֹצִיא) out of the city," &c. Surely it is not here intended that the priest should do more than superintend the removal of the leprous house.

But who told Dr. Colenso that the priest had to carry the whole bullock "on his back, on foot?" Is there a hint in the Bible of anything so absurd? Is not this remark rather a feeble attempt at vulgar wit, unworthy of a critic of Biblical history? Is such criticism consistent with the principle laid down in his preface, that his work must be taken in hand, "*not in a light and scoffing spirit*, but in that of a devout and living faith, which seeks only truth and follows fearlessly its footsteps."

Were these fine words written by the bishop who drew the ludicrous picture of a priest of God, trudging a distance of six miles, and carrying on his back a whole bullock with its "skin, and flesh, and head, and legs, and inwards, and dung?"

Behold the promise and the performance side by side!

¹ Lev. xiv. 45.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT THE FIRST MUSTER COMPARED WITH THE POLL-TAX RAISED SIX MONTHS PREVIOUSLY.

THE main difficulty raised by Dr. Colenso in this chapter is a numerical one. He cannot understand how it is possible that the number of adult males, included in the census taken "on the first day of the second month in the second year" after the exodus,¹ could have been identically the same (603,550) as the number of individuals who paid the poll-tax six months previously.²

Certainly, at first sight, this would appear a very remarkable coincidence. It would imply that the number of males, who attained the age of twenty within the six months, was precisely equal to that of the adult males who died during that period. Such a coincidence of increase and decrease would be, without doubt, just within the range of possibility; but, as Kurtz remarks, it would be "something striking."

Now, it appears to us, that the very fact of the result of the poll-tax and the result of the numbering being identical, points to the conclusion, that the two processes

¹ Numb. i. 1—46.

² Exod. xxxviii. 26.

together formed one and the same census. Surely there was no special necessity for two numberings within so short a period as six months. There is no record of any great war or plague in the interval, such as would have decimated the nation, and so rendered a second census expedient. We cannot suppose that the (so-called) second numbering was the actual census, and that the (so-called) first numbering had for its only object the collection of silver for the service of the tabernacle; for we are distinctly told that the contributions of the people were excessive, and that Moses was compelled to restrain their liberality. Nor can we imagine that any unnecessary or superfluous proceeding could have been ordained by Divine command.

It would seem, then, that the census was actually taken once only; namely, when the poll-tax was paid; and that the *total* number was *then* ascertained, and only incidentally mentioned; but that the command in Numb. i. was an order to prepare a classified return of the census already taken, with a view to the proper arrangement of the tribes in camps,¹ at the time when their wanderings were about to commence.

And here be it observed, that God scarcely commanded even one census; that, in fact, He merely ordered the "return" of a census which had been already taken.² In Exodus we do not find any Divine order for a numbering of the children of Israel. It

¹ Numb. ii.

² Contrast the command in Numb. i. 2, to bring up the return—"Take the sum" (שָׁאוּ אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ), with the direct command to actually *number* the first-born or to *number* the Levites. In the latter case,

would seem that Moses, like a skilful general, spontaneously contemplated a census with a view to a proper reorganization for the march through the wilderness, and that God therefore told him, "*When* thou takest (כִּי תִשָּׂא) the sum of the children of Israel after their number, *then* shall they give every man a ransom."¹ The command is not "take the sum," but merely "when thou takest the sum."

We know that when the "ransom" was collected, the census *was* taken. Dr. Colenso tells us that nothing is there said of any *census* being taken; but, if we refer to the account of the material used for the tabernacle, we find that "the silver of *them that were numbered* of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary."² In the following verse it is further explained, that this amount was the result of the payment of half a shekel "for every one that *went to be numbered*," and there can be no doubt from the phraseology here adopted, that the numbering was the primary process, and the payment of the half-shekel a mere incident of the numbering.

It might, however, be asked, how was it that six

instead of "Take the sum," we read "Number all the first-born" of the males of the children of Israel (פָּקֹד כָּל־בְּכוֹרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), and "Number the children of Levi" (פָּקֹד אֶת־בְּנֵי לֵוִי). Where, however, the command refers to a subdivision of the Levites into three groups of Kohathites, Merarites, and Gershonites, since the numbers had been already taken in the general Levitical census, and a mere "return" was necessary, we find the phrase "Take the sum of the sons of Kohath," &c.

¹ Exod. xxx. 12.

² Ibid. xxxviii. 25.

months elapsed between the taking of the census, as narrated in Exod. xxxviii., and the return and classification ordered in Numb. i.? A glance at the words of the Bible will show that the latter must have been a very laborious process, for which six months were certainly not too long a period. The appointed chieftains (עֲרֵה) had not merely to count the people. They had to register the names, to investigate the pedigree of each individual, to discover his tribe and family, and to satisfy themselves that he was qualified "to go forth to war." These details were most important, seeing that the whole nation was to be divided into separate camps, classified by their tribes. That these details were all carried out, we know by the words of Numb. i. 18, where we read that "they assembled all the congregation¹ together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward by their polls." We find in the particulars given of the number of each tribe, that in every case the same complex details are expressly referred to. We read "of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbered of them according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were

¹ The words וָאָתָּה כָּל הָעֲרֵה הַקְהִילִי should be rendered "and they assembled all the appointed chieftains." For the meaning of the word עֲרֵה see our remarks in Chap. IV.

able to go forth to war," &c.¹ And the same phrase is repeated in the case of every tribe.

The particulars to be taken of each individual tribe were then as follows:—(1) pedigree, (2) tribe, (3) clan, or family, (4) name, (5) age, (6) military qualification. Could such a census, embracing the classification of a population as large as that of London, be organized and carried out, and its return published, in less time than six months? We know that, now-a-days, with all our facilities of communication, many months elapse between a census and the publication of its results. Certainly the twenty days, which elapsed between the command given in Numb. i., and the first journeying of the classified camps,² would not have sufficed, more especially as we know that the very same twelve men, who were responsible for the numbering, were engaged, during at least a part of the interval, in presenting offerings³ on behalf of their respective tribes.

We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion, that at the time of the command to "take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel," the actual work of the census had been completed, that the individual details had been collected, that the "numerical return" was already known by the sum total of the ransom money, and that it then only remained to the enumerators

¹ Numb. i. 22.

² The command to take the "sum of the congregation" was given on the first day of the second month, in the second year of the exodus. (Numb. i. 1.) The first journey was taken on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year. (Numb. x. 11.)

³ Numb. vii.

to bring up their "nominal return," with all its details. We have, in modern practice, an analogous mode of dealing with the statistics of large bodies of men. To a general's despatches sent immediately after a battle, we shall find appended a "numerical list" of killed and wounded. The "nominal list" follows some time after.

Divine sanction was, without doubt, necessary to the rendering of such a return, so as to effect the camp organization consequent upon the census. The members of the various tribes had, no doubt, intermarried, and the first result of the tribe arrangement of the four camps would be to sever many families intimately allied. To many, such a classification would be unpalatable, and to enforce it the Divine authority given to the census would become necessary.

We need scarcely advert to Dr. Colenso's objection that the expression שֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ (translated "the shekel of the sanctuary") involves an anachronism, seeing that the sanctuary was not yet in existence. קֹדֶשׁ is not necessarily a noun, signifying the sanctuary, viz., the Tabernacle erected in the wilderness, but is also an adjective, simply meaning "sacred" or "holy," and the shekel might well have been called שֶׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ from being used for the redemption of the first-born,¹ or any other sacred purpose.

The LXX is therefore quite correct in the rendering τὸ δίδραχμον ἅγιον the "sacred shekel."

¹ Exod. xiii. 15.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ISRAELITES DWELLING IN TENTS.

Dr. COLENSO asserts that the statement in Exod. xvi. 16, "Take ye every man for them which are in his *tents*," conflicts with that in Lev. xxiii. 42, 43, where the reason assigned for the dwelling in booths for seven days at the Feast of Tabernacles, is, that "your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in *booths*." and he endeavours to explain that by the word "booths" in the second quotation, tents cannot be meant, because the Hebrew for a booth made of boughs and bushes is סֹכֶה, while the Hebrew for a tent is אֹהֶל.

Here, again, he has made an egregious mistake. There is nothing in the word סֹכֶה which implies a booth made of boughs and bushes; סֹכֶה is a generic term, signifying *any* shelter; and אֹהֶל is merely a species of סֹכֶה. Dr. Colenso would have discovered this by referring to any Hebrew dictionary, *e.g.*, that of Gesenius, who derives the word from סָכַךְ "to cover."

That the term סֹכֶה includes אֹהֶל, and that the two words are sometimes used as synonymous, may be seen by reference to 2 Sam. xi. 11, and vii. 6. In the first of

these passages, it is stated that "the ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents" (בְּסֻכּוֹת). In the second, God tells David that since He brought up the children of Israel from Egypt, He has "walked in a tent, and in a tabernacle." (בְּאֹהֶל יְבִמְשֻׁכָּן). Dr. Colenso, indeed, tells his readers that, in the first of the above-cited passages אֹהֶל is "used improperly for tents."

The blunder is evidently due to his supposition that Lev. xxiii. 40,¹ contains the description of the mode of erecting the booths for the Feast of Tabernacles. Certainly we are quite at a loss to discover for what purpose the *fruit* of the goodly tree עֵץ הָדָר פֵּרִי (erroneously translated in the authorized version "boughs of goodly trees") could have been used in constructing the Tabernacle. The bishop gets over this difficulty by following the faulty translation of the authorized version, and rendering פֵּרִי "boughs."

If, however, we refer to Josephus,² we shall find that the vegetable products referred to in Lev. xxiii. 40, were not used in the construction of the booths, but were carried into the temple by the worshippers who rejoiced with them before the Lord.

The practice of the Jews of modern times accords with this. Their tabernacles or booths are covered with common evergreens. But they carry round their synagogues

¹ "Ye shall take you on the first day the fruit (*English version*, "boughs") of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook."

² Antiq. iii. 10.

the four products referred to in Lev. xxiii. 40, viz., palm branches, myrtle branches, willow boughs, and citrons. The present practice of the Jews, which is *everywhere* the same, is the best interpretation of Lev. xxiii. 40.¹

Let us now proceed to the principal difficulty raised by Dr. Colenso in his eighth chapter. He says that two million Israelites would have required at least 200,000 tents, and asks, how they could have acquired so many, and how they could have carried them, seeing that they must have formed a load for 50,000 oxen.

There is no reason whatever for assuming that all the Israelites had tents. Again, we believe that Dr. Colenso is wrong in assuming that the Israelites, when they left Egypt, had tents with poles, pegs, and skins, such as are afforded by the luxury of modern travel. He surely cannot be ignorant of the rude, simple tent of the Arab. Even at the present day, in Syria and Palestine, we see at the corners of the flat house-tops, four sticks set upright, and carrying a piece of matting, which forms an awning, and supplies sufficient shelter from the sun by day and the dew by night.

¹ One of Dr. Colenso's apologists, writing in the Athenæum of the 13th Dec., 1862, under the *nom de plume* of "Philobiblius," quotes Nehemiah viii. 15, to prove that the vegetable products referred to were actually employed in the *construction* of the booths, the words being "Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written." But the truth is, that לעשות סוכה does not necessarily imply "*to make booths*," but to *celebrate the feast* of סוכה, just as we find the expression אֵת הַשַּׁבָּת לְעִשׂוֹת "to observe (not make) the Sabbath," or לְעִשׂוֹת פֶּסַח "to observe (not make) the Passover."

Dr. Colenso must surely have seen a gipsy tent constructed of a few sticks and a sheet of canvas, and affording cover and sufficient protection for a whole family. There is little doubt that even at the exodus such shelter was provided, in the first instance, only for the women and very young children. The Israelites were a vigorous race, and had, during their sojourn in Egypt, been used to all manner of hardships. Later, perhaps, their artificers supplied them with more efficient shelter during the winter.

That they had artificers, both male and female, and plenty of material, is proved by the details of the construction of the tabernacle. Their tents might have been at first of the roughest kind, but it is certain that later they were remarkable for their beauty. Else, wherefore the involuntary eulogy of their enemy, Balaam, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes, which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters."¹

¹ Numb. xxiv. 5, 6.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ISRAELITES ARMED.

THE process by which Dr. Colenso establishes the un-historical character of the Pentateuch is well exemplified in this chapter. He attributes expressions to the Bible which the Bible never uses, and then tries to prove that those expressions are false.

He quotes from Exod. xiii. 18, "The children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt." He says, that the word **הַמִּשְׁיִם** which is here rendered "harnessed," *appears* to mean 'armed,' or 'in battle array,' and gives some so-called reasons in support of this hypothesis.

But Dr. Colenso does not believe that the Israelites were armed when they went up out of Egypt, for he says, that—

"It is inconceivable that those down-trodden, oppressed, people should have been allowed by Pharaoh to possess arms, so as to turn out at a moment's notice 600,000 armed men."

And because it is inconceivable, Dr. Colenso would have us believe that the Bible history is untrue.

He would not let us suspect that his assumptions may be false; that possibly the word **הַמִּשְׁיִם** does not mean 'armed;' that possibly not the whole 600,000 men were armed, but only a fair proportion of them; and that possibly they possessed themselves of arms without

Pharaoh being able to prevent them. No. Dr. Colenso finds it much easier, and much more agreeable to his preconceived plan, to say, "therefore the Bible is false." Sooner such a conclusion than that his assumption should be wrong.

The fact is, that the word **הַמְשִׁים** is one of those terms, which, from their rare occurrence, are most difficult to translate with anything like certainty. This word has been the subject of controversy amongst the linguists of all ages; and upon a word of such doubtful meaning no critic should build up an argument to show that the Bible is false.

The word **הַמְשִׁים** means literally, "girded on the fifth rib," or "equipped," and may or may not mean also "armed." Onkelos, the Chaldaic paraphrast, translates it **מְרִירָן** ("active" or "eager"), and this rendering accords with all the few passages where the word **הַמְשִׁים** occurs in the Bible.

But, even if we were to assume that the word here really means "armed," there would be no difficulty. It were a gratuitous assumption to suppose, as Dr. Colenso does, that every one of the 600,000 carried weapons. When we say, "England is armed," we do not mean that every member of the population is armed, but only the army, navy, and volunteers, amounting in the aggregate to not more, perhaps, than a sixtieth part of the entire population. The assertion that the 600,000 men were able to go forth to war, does not by any means imply that they were all armed soldiers, but simply that they were capable of using arms and liable to be drawn for the military service, when occasion might

require. Dr. Colenso tells us, "we must suppose that the *whole body* of 600,000 warriors were armed, when they were numbered (Numb. i. 3) under Sinai. They possessed arms, surely, at that time, according to the story." But, in truth, the "story" tells us nothing of the sort. That a body of the Israelites possessed some arms is proved by the narrative of the battle with Amalek;¹ and the phrase then used by Moses, when he bids his adjutant, Joshua, "Choose us out men," seems to imply that the fighting men were merely a selection from the 600,000 "able to go forth to war."

How the Israelites obtained their arms is not so difficult to imagine. Although Dr. Colenso ridicules the idea, many might have obtained them by "borrowing,"² on the night of the exodus. It would have been much more ridiculous if they had "borrowed" other things in preference to weapons of war.

But Dr. Colenso cannot understand how the Israelites, if they were really armed, could have been so cowardly as to tremble at the approach of Pharaoh. This is not very difficult to understand. The Bible tells us that Pharaoh "took six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt,"³ "and his horsemen and his army,"⁴ and overtook the Israelites. Now, was not such a host of war-chariots and cavalry sufficient to excite the dismay and despair of an undisciplined multitude, even pre-

¹ Exod. xvii. 8—13.

² It may be well to remark here that the word לִשְׁכֹּל, which is translated "borrowed" in the authorized English version, is incorrectly so translated. The proper translation is "they asked."

³ Exod. xiv. 7.

⁴ Exod. xiv. 9.

suming that a large proportion were well armed?¹ The bravest men might well quail, placed in the position of the Israelites. The Bible makes no secret of the faults and failings of our ancestors, but it never hints at the idea that they were cowards.

It will be seen further, that although there might have been abundant means of acquiring arms, we are not bound to believe that even all the fighting soldiers were armed with the best appliances of war. We know that swords, spears, and shields are not the only weapons that can be used in warfare. If we refer to Macaulay,² we shall find how Monmouth's rustics were armed. "They had no other weapons but such as could be made out of the tools which they used in husbandry and mining operations. Of the rude implements of war, the most formidable was made by fastening the blade of a scythe erect on a strong pole." In our times, the insurgents in Poland were armed in the same way; we all know with what effect. And had not the children of Israel their tools of husbandry? An ox-goad might have served as a spear, a plough-share as a sword, and sharpened spades as battle-axes.

¹ Herodotus tells us (Lib. II. c. 166) that the Egyptians applied themselves wholly to military affairs.

² Vol. I., 587—8.

CHAPTER X.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE PASSOVER.

THE main questions raised in this chapter are:—

1. How could the Israelites, numbering about two millions of souls, and scattered about in cities and in pasture lands, all have been informed, within *twelve hours*, of the ordinance of the Passover, and of the mode in which it was to be celebrated?

2. How could they have obtained 150,000 lambs, the number of lambs imagined by Dr. Colenso as necessary for the celebration of the Passover?

3. How could they, within so short a time as twelve hours, have borrowed so extensively of the Egyptians?

4. How could so large a number of people have been suddenly warned at midnight to start at once in hurried flight for the wilderness?

I. In reply, we must first ask—How does Dr. Colenso know that within one single day all the Israelite population were commanded to keep the Passover, and actually did keep it?

He states as his reason that he finds the command of the Passover given in Exod. xii. 3; and that in the 12th verse of the same chapter, God says, “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night” (פִּלְגֵּלָה הַיָּם) (פִּלְגֵּלָה הַיָּם)

We shall see how far Dr. Colenso is justified in this view.

Whoever carefully peruses Exodus, chapters xi. and xii., will inevitably conclude that Moses's forewarning to Pharaoh of the intended destruction of the firstborns, occurred *before* God gave the command of the Passover. It is curious to see how Dr. Colenso assumes that in Moses's warning to Pharaoh, "*About midnight* will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die," "the midnight then next at hand is intended." As if the expression "about midnight," fixed anything beyond the *hour* of night at which the event would occur. The fixing of the hour was an important part of the answer to Pharaoh's haughty threat.¹ The tyrant had the effrontery to say to God's messenger, "Presume not again to enter my palace." To which Moses replied, "I will never trouble you again with my presence; but in the *dead of night*, your ministers will have to search me out, and on their knees to implore me, in your name, to depart with all my people. Only *then* will I condescend to go." It cannot be doubted that this is the true sense of the words "about midnight."

After the warning, God commands Moses and Aaron to tell the children of Israel that on the tenth day they shall take a lamb, and that on the fourteenth they shall kill it. Consequently Moses must have told the people some days *before* the tenth, otherwise the command would have been nugatory. In all probability, the

¹ Exod. x. 28.

command was given upon the first day of the month ; for it begins with the words, " This month shall be unto you the beginning of months ; " and it would have been a strange thing if so important a change in the calendar had been postponed till the month had half expired. In any case, the tenth day was devoted to choosing the lambs ; and the interval between the tenth and fourteenth gave the people ample time for preparing, and for familiarising themselves with the ceremonial upon which their safety depended. This is plainly implied in the text, " Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers a lamb for an house." " And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening."¹

The assumption, therefore, that the three events, viz., Moses informing the people, their getting the lambs and their killing them, were crowded within twelve hours, is positively opposed to the plain words of Holy Writ.

As to the words " this night " (בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה) upon which Dr. Colenso builds his whole speculation, it is evident, on a perusal of the context, that they allude to the same night as that on which the lambs were to be roasted and eaten.

As an example of this mode of using the word הַיּוֹם, we may quote Lev. xxiii. 6. Here we find, " On the fifteenth day of the *same month* is the feast of unleavened bread,"

¹ Exod. xii. 3, 6.

and the words *לחודש הזה* are used. Here certainly the month alluded to does not mean that on which the command was given. Again, in Lev. xvi. 30, we read, "For on *that day* shall the priest make an atonement;" and the words *ביום הזה* are used, certainly not meaning the day on which God was speaking, but the day to which allusion is made in the context.

II. The second "difficulty" raised by Dr. Colenso is one of the most remarkable kind, and is produced by a feat of arithmetic performed upon the Paschal lamb. Assuming that every Israelite, men, women, and children, ate of the Paschal lamb, and that each of these would be able to eat about a thirteenth part of a lamb, he startles us with the fact that 150,000 male lambs were required for the Passover, and that if these could have been spared for such a purpose, there must have been a flock of rams, ewes, and lambs of both sexes, numbering at least two millions. He then tells us that "in New Zealand there are few spots where sheep can be kept *two* to an acre;" but being of a liberal turn of mind, he says, let us allow *five* sheep to an acre; and thence concludes that the Israelites would have required 400,000 acres of grazing land for their sheep only, a space more than twice the size of Middlesex. Thence he infers, that the difficulty of communicating the Divine behest as to the Passover, and the order for the departure from Egypt in so short a time as the assumed twelve hours, is immensely increased.

Now the whole argument is nothing more than a string of assumptions.

1st. Dr. Colenso *assumes* that all the 2,000,000 Israel-

ites ate of the Paschal lamb. It is well known that the males only partook of the Passover; the words "every man according to his eating,"¹ "an ordinance to thee and to thy sons,"² sufficiently imply this; and tradition confirms this interpretation.

2ndly. He assumes that every person could and did eat a thirteenth part of a lamb,—rather a large quantity, if an Egyptian lamb in the month of April was as large as an English one now is, in the same month. The Egyptian spring being earlier, one would rather be disposed to believe, that a lamb of the first year in the month of April would have been a large animal. But be that as it may, we are informed by tradition, that it was not necessary to eat more of the lamb than a piece of the size of an olive,³ and that it might not be eaten as a meal to satisfy hunger.⁴ Therefore, one lamb would have served for several large families.

3rdly. He assumes that we may judge of the space occupied by the flocks in Egypt by the sheep-runs of Australia and New Zealand.

We know well that the New Zealand average of two sheep to an acre would be absurdly low here in England. *A fortiori*, we cannot compare the soil of such colonies with that of Egypt, whose fertility has always been proverbial.

4thly. He assumes that the Paschal sacrifice must have been a lamb. This need not have been the case.

¹ Exod. xii. 4.

² Ibid. xii. 24.

³ MAIMONIDES on the "Paschal Lamb," VIII., 3.

⁴ "Pesachim," p. 70, 85*b.*, 91.

It is expressly stated, "Ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats."¹ The goat might have been, as in many places at the present time, a domestic animal, not fed in the fields.

5thly. He assumes that the Israelites were obliged to take the Paschal sacrifices from their own flocks. For aught the Bible tells us, they might have been all taken from the Egyptian flocks. Certainly the bulk of the Israelites were not shepherds, but, being engaged upon large works of construction, must have been residents in cities. These, no doubt, procured the lambs or goats from their Egyptian friends in whose sight they had "found favour."

Take away the five assumptions of Dr. Colenso, and what becomes of his argument? What becomes of his assertion, which he makes elsewhere, that the Israelites must have possessed at least 2,000,000 sheep and oxen? and what becomes of his conclusion, that the Israelites must thus have spread over an area equal in size to the whole county of Hertfordshire; and that it would thus have been impossible to communicate the word of command in so short a time as the wrongly assumed period of twelve hours?

III. Dr. Colenso's notion, that the borrowing only took place at the same time as the preparation of the Paschal lamb, probably originated in his ignorance of Hebrew grammar and consequent adhesion to the authorized English version. The preterite in *Exod. xii. 35*, וּבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשׂוּ has the same sense as the English

¹ *Exod. xii. 5.*

pluperfect. The true grammatical reading of the verses is, "And the children of Israel *had done* according to the word of Moses, and *had borrowed*, &c."

It would be enough for our purpose, if we only showed that such *might* be the meaning of the passage. But we go further. We contend that there is here a peculiarity of expression indicating that such *must* be the sense. For, if verse 35 had been merely a continuation of what occurred on that night, then the context would have continued in the same form, and, as in all the preceding verbs, the *historic future* would have been used. Thus, instead of **וַיַּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשֵׂי**, which completely breaks the "historic" structure, the words used would have been **וַיַּעֲשֵׂי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**. This abrupt change of grammatical structure proves, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the acts described had already occurred before the previously mentioned incidents took place, that the children of Israel had already "borrowed" before the fulfilment of the command of the Paschal lamb.

Moreover, we know full well that there was no lack of time for this process of borrowing; for they had been commanded to borrow at the very commencement of the plagues, or some months before the exodus. The very first time that God promised a deliverance, He informed Moses of the intended borrowing of vessels of silver and gold, of raiment, &c.¹ Immediately afterwards, Moses and Aaron assembled all the elders, "and Aaron spake all the words, which the Lord had spoken unto Moses,"²

¹ Exod. iii. 21, 22.

² Ibid. iv. 29, 30.

and thus, during all this long interval, the Israelites had ample time for carrying out the command.

As to the repetition of the command in *Exod. xi.* 2, 3, it implied, that as the climax was approaching, the people were, in carrying out the command, to execute it with greater activity.

IV. Dr. Colenso cannot understand how the order for the departure of the Israelites could have been conveyed to them in so short a time. The natural answer is, that they were in expectation of this event—the crisis of the wonderful events of the past year. Were they not to eat the Passover with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hands? What did this mean, but that they should be ready for the word of command, bidding them to march out from the house of bondage?

And must not the terror-stricken Egyptians, in whose houses the angel of death had done such fearful work, and was yet lurking, have gladly helped, at all cost and hazards, to hurry out the Israelites, thinking them the cause of their firstborns' death? Read the fearful narrative of the tenth plague,¹ and it needs no vivid imagination to conceive the truth of the statement, that "the Egyptians were urgent upon the people that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, We be all dead men."²

So urged by the frantic Egyptians, the Israelites must have needed no further intimation that the hour for their departure had arrived.

¹ *Exod. xii.* 29—33.

² *Ibid. xii.* 33.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARCH OUT OF EGYPT.

THE main difficulties newly raised in this chapter are two :—

1st. How could all the Israelites in one night have assembled at Rameses, and made their preparations for a journey?

2ndly. How could they all have started next day?

Let us ask another question. How does Dr. Colenso know, and how can he prove, that they did *all* assemble at one place? The only passage he can adduce, is the 37th verse of Exod. xii. But there it is not stated that “they gathered at Rameses,” but only that they “journeyed from Rameses about 600,000, &c.” On the other hand, we read in the 41st verse, “And it came to pass at the end of the 430 years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that *all the hosts of the Lord* went out from *the land of Egypt*.” Again, in the 42nd verse we read, “It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the *land of Egypt*.” These two passages evidently show that the term Rameses in v. 37 does not indicate one particular spot or town, but a province; and as by leaving Rameses the Israelites left Egypt, we must presume that Rameses was a province on the confines of Egypt. That there was a *province*

called Rameses, as well as a town of that name, we know from Gen. xlvii. 11, where we find that Joseph gave his father and brothers "a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the *land of Rameses*."

The phrase "*all* the hosts of the Lord" clearly implies that the Israelites left in many hosts or bodies—that they were not all assembled in one body. That they all started on the same day is clearly asserted in the text. But in this there is no difficulty. As we have already shown, the Israelites were prepared for the event several days before. They fully expected it, and had made all their preparations, having even kneaded their flour into dough. At midnight, the terrible death of the first-borns took place simultaneously throughout the *whole land* of Egypt,¹ so that wherever the Israelites were, their frantic neighbours placed no difficulties in the way of their going when the appointed time came, but, giving them whatever they asked, insisted only upon their immediate departure.

Nor were the Israelites at a loss whither to turn their steps. Not to mention the very fair presumption that Moses had, in all probability, appointed a general *rendezvous*, we know for certain that they expected to go to the land of Canaan.² All who intended to go to the land of Canaan had a certain route by which they would proceed: all the bands started towards the same point—they may have met at Succoth or Etham. Nothing whatever is mentioned in Scripture about the time occupied in these journeys. For aught the Bible tells

¹ Exod. xi. 4, 5, 6; xii. 12, 13, 29.

² Exod. iii. 17; vi. 8.

us, some days may have elapsed from the time of their starting from Rameses till they arrived at Succoth, and thence again some days more till they came to Etham. All we know, as to time, is that in a month they came to the wilderness of Sin,¹ and surely this allows ample time for the march.

But Dr. Colenso, not satisfied with creating difficulties, adopts the difficulties created by others. He quotes from Kurtz, that the shortest road from the point of the Israelites' departure "to the sea, taking into account the circuitous road by which the Israelites went, would be so long, that it would be necessary to travel 17 or 20 miles a day in order to accomplish the whole in *three* days. Others may believe it if they please. But I cannot believe that such a procession as we have described, could keep up a journey of 17 or 20 miles a day for three days running."

But the Bible says nothing about three days only having elapsed from the departure from Egypt (Rameses) to the encampment at the Red Sea. It is a matter of Jewish tradition that the passage of the Red Sea took place seven days after the night of the exodus; but there is, in fact, no record of the time, in any part of the biblical narrative.

Again, Dr. Colenso bids us imagine that "the people travelled through the open desert in a wide body, fifty men abreast, as some suppose to have been the practice in the Hebrew armies," and then, by another arithmetical feat, discovers that such a column would occupy the

¹ Exod. xvi. 1.

impossible length of 22 miles. But the whole idea that the Israelites marched in such a long narrow column is a mere fancy. The Bible says nothing about it. It is quite true that some have supposed that the word חֲמִשִּׁים, translated 'harnessed,' signifies 'in rows of 50' (חֲמִשִּׁים, fifty) or 'in companies of 50;' but no one was ever so insane as to hint at the notion, that such a supposed arrangement necessitated the formation of a long thin line of procession, 50 men abreast, and 22 miles long. A classification in fifties (if such an interpretation of the ambiguous word be accurate) is not inconsistent with any form. Possibly a square would have been found most convenient. But, in truth, there is not a word in the Scriptures to warrant the idea of Dr. Colenso.

Dr. Colenso's imaginative power, however, takes a very limited range upon some occasions. He can compare the departure of the Israelites from Egypt to nothing better than his own flight from his home in Natal, when aroused at night by an alarm that some hostile Zulus were coming. He says that, remembering the confusion in his own small household of 30 or 40 persons on that occasion, he does not hesitate to declare the whole statement of the exodus of 2,000,000 people with their flocks and herds, to be utterly incredible and impossible.

But, it will be seen, there are some important differences between the circumstances of the exodus of Israel and that of Dr. Colenso.

1. The Israelites expected that they were to march out. They were prepared, their loins girt, their staves in

their hands, and their shoes on their feet. Dr. Colenso was taken by surprise.

2. As stated before, the Egyptians helped them to march out with all possible speed. Dr. Colenso was not aided by such kind enemies.

3. The Israelites were elated with the prospect of freedom, and therefore hope and joy quickened their footsteps. Dr. Colenso and his party were, no doubt, half paralysed with fear, thinking that death was at their very door.

4. The exodus of the Israelites was under the special guidance of the Almighty.

This is the first time in this work that we account for an extraordinary fact by calling it a miracle; but in this case we feel that we not only *may* call the Exodus a miracle, but that we *must* so call it, for it is part of our creed. The Bible teems with expressions in which God's special intervention in the Exodus is declared. God opens the Decalogue with the words, "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt."¹ The Almighty says to His people, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings."² And in the narrative itself, where certainly no mere figure of speech could be implied, we find that "it came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies."³

We reply to Dr. Colenso, then, that the Exodus was unquestionably, even in its minutest detail, a miracle,

¹ Exod. xx. 2.

² Ibid. xix. 4.

³ Ibid. xii. 51.

that is, brought about by a special interposition of Providence, all apparent obstacles notwithstanding. If he cannot understand what became of the sick and infirm, or the women in or near childbirth, we reply to him in the words of the Psalmist, "There was not one feeble person among their tribes."¹ No doubt a startling miracle, but it is only one of the great chain of miracles which attended the exodus from Egypt, and the wanderings of our ancestors in the wilderness.

¹ Psalm cv. 37.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SHEEP AND CATTLE OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS.

IN this chapter, Dr. Colenso argues that it is incredible that such vast flocks, as the Israelites must have possessed, could have found means of sustenance during the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness.

It will be found that the incredibility depends upon the following assumptions, all of which it is necessary that Dr. Colenso should prove:—

(1.) That the locality known as Sinai at the present time is really the Sinai of Scripture.

(2.) That the immense flocks and herds were actually preserved during the wanderings of the Israelites.

(3.) That the wilderness was then in precisely the same sterile state as at present.

(4.) That there was no miraculous interposition.

The first of these propositions Dr. Colenso makes no attempt to prove ; and, yet, it is a most important point to show that the very Sinai, which was selected as an encampment for nearly a whole year, and which, he tells us, the Israelites must have found bitterly cold during the winter months, was identically the same Sinai that is at present so called. He believes that the Israelites

must have found it bitterly cold, because Ruppell says that "in the mountainous districts it is very cold in the winter nights." But, even taking for granted Dr. Colenso's assumption that the identity of the locality is established, how are we to know that the Israelites encamped on the *mountains* about Sinai? Does an army usually choose the coldest winter quarters it can find?

The second proposition, that the sheep and cattle of the Israelites constituted, according to the Bible narrative, an enormous herd, amounting to at least two millions of sheep and oxen, is founded, principally, upon the assumption (which we have already combated) that 200,000 male lambs were required for the celebration of the passover. We have already stated that a very small piece of the paschal lamb was required to be eaten by each individual. A mere fraction only of the 200,000 would therefore be sufficient.

But Dr. Colenso further says that it is certain the Bible story represents the Israelites as possessing the flocks and herds during the whole of the forty years which they passed in the wilderness. He tells us that this is proved by Moses' question, when the people murmured for animal food, "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them?"¹ Dr. Colenso, however, forgets to quote the context, "or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?"

If the words he quotes could prove that the Israelites possessed flocks and herds, the words which he takes

¹ Numb. xi. 22.

care not to quote would show that they had at their command all the fish of the sea !

He tries also to prove that the flocks were preserved throughout the wanderings, by the fact stated that "the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle."¹ He owns that this is stated after the capture of the extensive flocks and herds of the Midianites ; but he objects, that as the spoil was equally divided among the people, the tribes in question could not have been distinguished for the possession of any extraordinary number. He forgets, however, that they might easily have exchanged their other booty for flocks, and so acquired "a very great multitude."

The next assumption, that the wilderness was a desert at the time of the journeyings of the children of Israel, is also gratuitous. Dr. Colenso says, "the state of the country through which they [the Israelites] travelled has not undergone any material change from that time to this. It is described as being then—what it is now—a 'desert' land." But we must protest most emphatically against this notion that the word מִדְבָּר signifies a desert or a sterile waste. If we refer to Gesenius' Lexicon, we shall find the first signification he gives to the word is "regio vasta, plana, gregibus pascendis apta, non deserta." In Joel we find the words נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר "the pastures of the wilderness do spring;"² and in Psalms we read יִרְעֻפוּ נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר "They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness."³ A wilderness, מִדְבָּר,

¹ Numb. xxxii. 1.

² Joel ii. 22.

³ Psalms lxxv. 13.

was generally uninhabited, though we find that Joab had a "house in the wilderness."¹ But, although, as a rule, uninhabited and uncultivated, grass for cattle would certainly grow in a wilderness. We read in Gen. xxxvi. 24, that Anah "found the mules in the wilderness, מִרְקָר, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." In 1 Samuel xvii. 28, we read that Eliab asked David, "with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?" In all these cases the word מִרְקָר is used. It is clear, therefore, that the "wilderness" of the Bible is not what we conceive now under the name of desert.

Granting the assumption that the path of the Israelites was really that which modern travellers indicate, we have really no proof that, at the time of the exodus, the wilderness was utterly barren and destitute of water.

We know well that the physical features of different districts vary altogether in a few centuries. No one can trace in the Canaan of modern times, "the land flowing with milk and honey." About 300 trees are all that remain of the proud cedars of Lebanon. The ordinary course of nature frequently causes changes still more startling. It is well known that the long-continued and ever recurring sand-storms could eventually dry up every particle of moisture in a fertile forest, and convert it at last into a dreary waste.

The very passages from Dean Stanley's work which Dr. Colenso quotes plainly indicate that, whatever the present condition of the so-called desert, water abounded there at some time or other. The numerous *wadys*,

¹ 1 Kings ii. 34.

which Dean Stanley describes as being "exactly like rivers, except in having no water," and the "appearance of torrent beds and banks, and clefts in the rocks for tributary streams, and at times even rushes and shrubs fringing their course," show distinctly that the now parched soil was once plentifully irrigated. Stanley tells us that this succession of dry water-courses is exactly like the dry bed of a Spanish river. How do we know when living waters ceased to flow in these now thirsty river beds?

Quite incidentally, the Pentateuch bears evidence to the abundant presence of water in the course of the wanderings. In Numbers xxxiii. 33, the Israelites are said to have encamped in Jotbath. Nothing is there said of any remarkable characteristic of this or any other encampment; but in Deut. x. 7, where Moses gives a *resumé* of the history of the wanderings, he *incidentally* describes Jotbath as "a land of rivers of waters." Where there was water, there was surely no scarcity of pasture.

And the very fact of the merely *occasional* murmurings of the Israelites at the want of water, shows distinctly that the want was only occasional; a temporary want, probably contrived by the Divine Leader of Israel to prevent His people from regarding the supply of their daily necessities as a natural matter of course.

But Dr. Colenso appeals to the Pentateuch to prove that there was no water. He quotes Deut. viii. 11—15, "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God . . . who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions and drought, where there was no water." Here Dr. Colenso

stops, and forgets that this sentence is immediately followed by the words, "who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint." So, too, he quotes Numbers xx. 4, 5, to show that the Israelites said, "neither is there any water to drink;" but he forgets to quote the context to show that "water came out abundantly" from the rock. So, also, he quotes from Jeremiah ii. 6, to show that the wilderness "was a land of drought," but he forgets to point out that the whole tendency of the quotation is to show the great power of that God, by whose interposition the Israelites surmounted the terrors of the wilderness.

Truly, this is a convenient mode of quotation. Dr. Colenso reads his Bible through a polariscope. He catches half a ray, and all he sees is darkness. So let us remind him of a few famous words which he himself quotes, in his introductory chapter, to show the public the line of criticism he proposes to adopt. "Beware," says Burgon, "of playing tricks with its [the Bible's] plain language. Beware of suppressing any part of the evidence it supplies to its own meaning."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NUMBER OF THE ISRAELITES COMPARED WITH THE
EXTENT OF THE LAND OF CANAAN.

THE objection raised in this chapter is founded upon Exod xxiii. 29, where God tells the Israelites that when He will drive out the nations of Canaan to make way for His chosen people, He "will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee."

Dr. Colenso says that the whole territory divided amongst the tribes was about 11,000 square miles; that a population of two millions of Israelites (about the number who entered the promised land with Joshua) would have rendered Canaan as populous as Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, at the present time; and that, with such a population, there was no danger of the beasts of the field multiplying to any alarming extent. He tells us that Natal, with an extent of 18,000 square miles, and a population of only 150,000, suffers no inconvenience from wild beasts, and he cannot see any reason why Palestine should be different from Natal.

For which cogent reason, Dr. Colenso would have us believe; either that the number of the Israelites stated in the Bible is unhistorical, or that the fear expressed was unfounded.

As usual, Dr. Colenso here seizes a verse or two, and forgets all about the context. If he had looked one verse further, he would have perceived that the territory from which the aborigines were to be driven, little by little, extended "from the Red Sea even to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river," (Euphrates),¹ a region of much greater extent than that which was divided among the tribes by Joshua. The country of which the Israelites took immediate possession, did not, perhaps, greatly exceed the area stated by Dr. Colenso; but the territory which they were promised in Exod. xxiii., and which they inherited eventually,² contained 50,000 square miles, and was consequently nearly five times as large as Dr. Colenso would make it.

Two millions of people, spread over 50,000 square miles, would certainly not form a dense population; and when we consider that, in those primitive times, there were no fire-arms, we may well imagine that dread of the beasts of the field would seriously interfere with the quiet enjoyment of a vast territory. That in spite of the gradual driving out of the aborigines, wild beasts still existed, and frequented the haunts of men, we know from several passages in the Bible.³ To judge from the language of the poetical books of the Bible, the lion alone must have been a constant object of terror; and, perhaps, we may find no better illustration of this than the simple fact that in the Hebrew language, distin-

¹ Exod. xxiii. 31.

² 2 Chron. ix. 26.

³ Judg. xiv. 5, xv. 4; 1 Sam. xvii. 34; 2 Kings ii. 24.

guished as it is for the poverty of its vocabulary, there are no fewer than seven words to express "lion."¹

It will be at once admitted, by any reasonable person, that no analogy can be drawn between the prevalence of wild beasts in Canaan and Natal. We know nothing of their relative prevalence when undisturbed by the invasion of man. We know nothing of the relative number of species of wild beasts in the two countries. But one thing we do know, that the means of extermination now-a-days are fearfully effectual. No wild beast can withstand the rifle. In ancient times, with the sling, the arrow, and the spear, as the only weapons, an encounter with a wild beast was a terrible adventure.

We can, therefore, see nothing wonderful in the fear expressed that the beasts of the field might multiply if the conquest of Palestine were too rapid. It seems quite natural, and quite justified by the circumstances of time and place.

We repudiate altogether, and we believe every candid student of the Bible will likewise repudiate, the authority of Natal experiences in such matters. Indeed, we are not even sure that the information afforded by Dr. Colenso is reliable. If we are to believe Mr. Shuter,² wild beasts are by no means extinct in Natal. May not the assertion of Dr. Colenso that "lions, elephants, rhinoceroses, and hippopotami have long ago disappeared" from Natal, be *unhistorical*?

¹ אַרְיֵה, בָּקָר, לָבִיא, לֵיִשׁ, שָׁחַל, נֹר, שָׁחַץ.

² SHUTER'S "Kaffirs of Natal."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NUMBER OF THE FIRST-BORN COMPARED WITH THE
NUMBER OF MALE ADULTS.

THE difficulty raised in this chapter is by no means new. Dr. Colenso has unfairly increased it by a process of exaggeration, which we shall presently disclose. But the difficulty is one which, even when reduced to its true and proper dimensions, may be legitimately raised as a point of biblical criticism. It is, however, by no means insuperable.

It appears, according to Numb. iii. 43, that "all the first-born males, by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and three-score and thirteen" (22,273). Adopting the words of Kurtz, Dr. Colenso says,—

"If there were 600,000 males of twenty years and upwards, the whole number of males may be reckoned at 900,000, in which case there would be only *one* first-born to *forty-two* males. In other words, the number of boys in every family must have been on the average *forty-two*."

And Dr. Colenso adds the following words in italics:—"according to the story of the Pentateuch, *every mother of Israel must have had, on the average, forty-two sons.*"

He says nothing here about female offspring; but he leaves his readers to imagine about a like number of daughters, thus making the total average number of children of each mother, 84.

In a later part of the chapter, in analysing the very weak reply of Kurtz, Dr. Colenso admits that there may have been an equal number of first-born females, and then says, "44,546 first-born children [of both sexes] among a population of 1,800,000, would imply that each mother had, on the average, forty-two children, *as before*, but twenty-one sons and twenty-one daughters." We have italicised the words "*as before*," to show how cleverly Dr. Colenso shifts his ground, and then asserts that his position is "*as before*." At first he maintains that, "every mother in Israel must have had, on the average, forty-two sons;" afterwards he admits that the number must be reduced to twenty-one, and yet has the hardihood to assert that "this, however, will not, by any means, get rid of, or *at all diminish*, the essential difficulty of the question now before us." If division by two is not diminution, Dr. Colenso will have to publish an amended edition of his far-famed Arithmetic. But it must be candidly admitted that, after allowing for the exaggeration, there yet remains the difficulty that, according to the superficial interpretation of the text, each mother would, on an average, be the parent of 42 children, sons and daughters. This is, of course, highly improbable. Whatever the rate of increase, and however miraculously the children of Israel multiplied, such numbers appear almost incredible. How then can we account for them?

REPLY 1.

We submit that the first-born, of whom Moses was ordered to take a census, were not first-born children in the sense in which we ordinarily understand the term.

Dr. Colenso, very rightly viewing the command for the numbering of the first-born in connection with the ordinance for their sanctification, (the whole object of their numbering being their redemption, man for man, by the Levites,) quotes Exod xiii. 12, 13, and Numb. iii. 12, to show the necessary qualification. But he makes a great mistake in interpreting the meaning of these texts. He says that the firstborn sons numbered were "not the first-born on the father's side, as Michaelis supposes, so that a man might have many wives and many children, but only one first-born. They are expressly stated to have been the firstborn on the mother's side—'all the firstborn that openeth the matrix.'"

The fact is that the very words quoted are not words of *interpretation*, but words of *limitation*. The first-born to be redeemed was not to be a mere *primogenitus*. He was to be not only בְּכוֹר—firstborn of his father—but also פֶּטֶר רֵחַם, the firstborn of his mother. If the one qualification only were necessary, why should the two (בְּכוֹר and פֶּטֶר רֵחַם) be placed side by side in all passages where the redemption of the firstborn is commanded? Or if, as Dr. Colenso imagines, בְּכוֹר and פֶּטֶר רֵחַם mean the same thing, the words would have been "every *son* that openeth the matrix;" for the text, as it stands, would be a tautology, and would be equivalent to saying, "every firstborn that is a firstborn."

We must, therefore, inquire what is the meaning of בְּכוֹר and what the meaning of פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם, and we shall find that the two terms carry with them two totally different qualifications.

First, as to בְּכוֹר; Gesenius translates it, "the firstborn of the father." A reference to the following texts, Gen. xxv. 13, xxxv. 23, xxxvi. 15, xlix. 3, Deut. xxi. 15, 17, Judg. viii. 20 and 30, 1 Sam. viii. 2, 1 Chron. iii. 1, Psalms cv. 36, will invariably show that though, in the cases referred to, there were other sons firstborn on the mother's side, the firstborns on the father's side only were called בְּכוֹרִים.

But the expression פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם, the child "that openeth the matrix," evidently has a special reference to primogeniture on the mother's side.

Having thus considered the meanings of the terms themselves, let us now see what limitations are implied by a combination of both; for it is evident, by reference to Numb. iii 12, that the sons to be redeemed were to carry the double qualification of בְּכוֹר and פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם—were to be firstborn of the father, and also firstborn of the mother.

(a.) In cases of polygamy, there might have been many instances of sons who were פֶּטֶר רֶחֶם—firstborn of the mother, without being also בְּכוֹר—firstborn of the father, and such sons would not have to be redeemed. That polygamy prevailed we know by the fact that it was at least recognised as an existing institution by the Mosaic code.¹ In the absence of any positive knowledge of

¹ Exod. xxi. 9, 10; Lev. xviii.; Deut. xvii. 17, xxi. 15, 16, 17, xxiv. 5.

the extent to which polygamy prevailed, it is impossible to assert how far such a circumstance tended to reduce the number of the firstborn sons to be redeemed; but the reduction must certainly have been considerable.

(b.) But there is another limitation to the term פֶּטֶר רִאשׁוֹן. In all cases where a mother had had stillborn issue, or where a miscarriage had happened, the first living offspring could not have been strictly called פֶּטֶר רִאשׁוֹן, and would thus have been exempt from the law of redemption. The practice of the Jews of modern times, based on the right understanding of the Bible, accords fully with this interpretation. The "redemption of the firstborn," פֶּדְיֹת רִאשׁוֹן, is still celebrated by a service which includes a money payment to a descendant of the priestly family of Aaron; but this ceremony is always omitted when the firstborn has been preceded by abortive issue, and thus has no claim to be considered פֶּטֶר רִאשׁוֹן. Upon a moderate calculation, one-tenth, at least, of the total number of firstborns would have been exempt through this limitation.

(c.) It will be moreover observed that the firstborns were numbered only from one month old and upward. Now, modern statistics show that, in the first month, ten per cent of all children die,¹ and that the mortality at this early age is greater among the male children than the female.² These circumstances will admit a further limitation to the extent of one-tenth.

¹ Dr. HEYSHAM, "On the Bills of Mortality of Carlisle;" also Dr. HAYGARTH, "On the law of Mortality at Chester."

² MOSER, "Die Gesetze der Lebensdauer."

(d.) Dr. Colenso admits¹ that an allowance of one in four may be made for those firstborns of the current generation who had died before the numbering, or who had been drowned by the order of Pharaoh; and this would give a further important reduction.

(e.) A larger reduction would be caused by a startling circumstance, which we learn from several works on modern vital statistics; viz.: that of a given number of firstborn children of both sexes, the females are by far more numerous than the males. A celebrated statist, Bueck, finds,² that of 100 firstborn children, 65 are girls, and 35 only boys.

(f.) Allowance must also be made for firstborn children otherwise qualified, but disqualified only by being under one month old.

(g.) According to a law which obtains even among the Jews of the present day, the firstborn of a Levite, or of a Levite woman, was exempt from redemption. This would involve a still further reduction of about 8,000 firstborns, male and female.³

(h.) It must also be remembered that there might have been very many cases in which (both parents being dead) doubts might naturally have arisen whether a man was really qualified both as a בְּכוֹר and a פֶּטֶר רִחָם under limitation referred to in clause (b).

All these considerations would tend to reduce to an enormous degree the number of firstborn males to be

¹ Page 87.

² GERSON and JULIUS' Magazine. Part 15, page 602.

³ There were 8,580 between the ages of thirty and fifty.

actually counted for the redemption census; and that number (22,273) would, therefore, not in any manner represent the actual proportion of families.

Let us see what these figures really imply, and to what extent they must be increased before they can, in any way, represent truly the number of families.

22,273 first-born males would, according to (e) imply also
41,364 first-born females,

Or— 63,637 male and female first-borns living at the time of
the census.

Add $\frac{1}{4}$ = 21,212 for the quarter of the original number supposed to
have died (d).

84,849

Add $\frac{1}{3}$ = 9,428 for the 10 per cent. due to limitation (b).

94,277

Add $\frac{1}{4}$ = 10,475 for the 10 per cent. due to limitation (c).

104,752

Add 8,000 for first-borns of Levites and Levite women (g).

112,752 approximate total number of *first-births*, male and
female, before reduction by the considerations set
forth in (b), (c), (d), (e), and (g).

Thus we see that the 22,273 firstborn males, actually counted at the redemption census, might have represented 112,752 firstbirths, or 112,752 families. This would give an average of 16 children to each family, instead of 84 as represented by Dr. Colenso. The reduced average is certainly high, although by no means impossible. But

it will be seen that we have not taken into account the reduction consequent upon the considerations (*a*), (*f*), and (*h*), it being manifestly impossible even to surmise the extent to which they would affect the calculation. Still, it must be admitted that *some* allowance must be made for (*a*) polygamy; (*f*) the firstborns under one month old; and (*h*) the cases of doubtful firstbirth. Probably, these cumulative details would tend to a further limitation of those qualified for the redemption-census, to such an extent as to reduce the average number of children in each family to 10 or 11.

REPLY 2.

Another reply might be given to Dr. Colenso's objections, quite independent of the statistical arguments above adduced.

It seems highly probable that the 22,273 enumerated in Numb. iii. do not represent the whole body of the firstborn sons from one month old existing at the time, but only a *portion* of them, namely, those who were actually devoted to God by consecration to His service; and it seems possible—indeed highly probable—that the total number of firstborn sons may have been three or four times as great as stated in the passage under consideration.

In Exod. xiii. 2, we read the command to sanctify to God "all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel." Sanctification to God implied the devotion of a person or thing, wholly and

entirely, to the service of God.¹ The firstborn, no doubt, at first exercised those functions, which, at a later period, appertained to the priests and Levites. For, in Exod. xxiv. 5, we read of the "young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord." At that time, there was no priesthood; and all our commentators agree in considering that the "young men" there alluded to, were the firstborn sons who had been consecrated to the Divine service.

It is obvious that it may not, in all cases, have been agreeable to parents to devote their firstborn sons, or to the firstborn sons themselves to be devoted to the sacred ministry. Hence Exod. xiii. 13, permitted that "the firstborn of man among thy children *mayest* thou redeem." And many would, no doubt, have availed themselves of this alternative.

That the word תִּפְדֶּה has to be translated "thou mayest redeem," and not "thou shalt redeem," as in the authorised English version, is obvious from the context; for if it were obligatory that every firstborn should be redeemed, none would have remained to be consecrated and to minister to God. Besides, in referring to the firstling of the ass, which was to be redeemed with a lamb,² the word תִּפְדֶּה must necessarily imply "thou *mayest* redeem," not "thou shalt redeem;" for immediately afterwards follows the alternative, "and *if* thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck," clearly showing that תִּפְדֶּה is permissive, not obligatory; and if it

¹ Deut. xv. 19.

² Exod. xiii. 13.

has this sense in the first part of Exod. xiii. 13, in the case of the firstling of the ass, it must surely have the like sense in the second part of the same verse, where the word applies to the firstborn of man, the two parts of the sentence being in apposition.

So, likewise, in the same verse, since "*every* firstling of an ass" can only mean every firstling which required to be redeemed, "all the firstborn of man" must imply only those firstborn who required to be redeemed, that is, who had not been devoted to the service of God. The word "all," therefore, must have some limitation.

Now it must be borne in mind that the commandment for the sanctification and redemption of the firstborn of man, in Exod. xiii., was to take effect at once,¹ and it thus took effect before the appointment of a priesthood. But when the priesthood had been established, and the tribe of Levi had been elevated, it was pointed out² how the redemption, or alternative sanctification, of the firstborn of man was to be thenceforward understood, and we read, "Everything that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the Lord, shall be thine [the priest's], nevertheless the firstling of man mayest thou redeem outright,³ and the firstling of unclean beasts mayest thou redeem." The text then proceeds to describe

¹ Exod. xxii. 29.

² Numb xviii. 15, 16.

³ The form *תפדה תפדה*, the infinitive preceding the finite verb, does not here imply a command emphasised, but imparts to the ransoming a meaning of completeness or thorough outright action. Examples of a like use of this grammatical form may be found in Job vi. 2, Gen. xxxi. 30, Lev. xix. 20.

the amount of ransom money for "those that are to be redeemed."

How the unclean beasts could be redeemed, has been already described. The text then points out that though an alternative is given in the cases of the firstborn among men, or the firstlings of unclean animals, no such alternative was to exist in the case of clean animals.

The law respecting the firstborn of man consequently stood thus *after* the establishment of the priesthood ;—by virtue of their birth they belonged to the priests, but by payment of five shekels, they could be ransomed.¹

Admitting this alternative, it follows that the 22,273 referred to in Numbers iii. 43 would be *the firstborn in whose behalf the ransom had not been paid*, and who were devoted to the service of God ; while those (probably many thousands) who had declined to join the holy ministry, and for whom consequently the ransom had been already long ago paid, having been "redeemed outright," had ceased to be regarded as בְּכוֹרִים or "firstborn."

It may appear, at first sight, strange, that by the mere payment of a ransom, the term "firstborn" should cease to be applied to the individuals so released ; but, in truth, the proper meaning of the word בְּכוֹר is not so much "firstborn," as one entitled to, or possessed of, the rights of primogeniture.

In the case of Jacob and Esau,² the בְּכוֹרָה was the subject of barter ; and after Esau had parted with it, he was no longer called a בְּכוֹר, and no longer enjoyed the rights of primogeniture.

See Ezek. xlv. 30, and Neh. x. 36.

² Gen. xxv. 33.

Again, we hear of Reuben being deprived of the בְּכֹרָה, and we find it the subject of transfer ;¹ “ Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn ; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given (נִתְּנָה בְּכֹרָתוֹ) unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright (וְלֹא לְהַתִּיחֵשׁ לְבְּכֹרָה). For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler ; but the birthright was Joseph’s ” (וְהַבְּכֹרָה לְיוֹסֵף).

Again, in Deuteronomy, where the law provides for the contingency of a man having two wives not equally beloved, we find that the father “ may not make the son of [the beloved firstborn (לֹא יוֹכֵל לְבָכֵר) before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn.”² Surely no act of a father, after the birth of his children, can alter the order of their birth.

From all these instances, then, it follows that by the term בְּכוֹר is implied, not, of necessity, the son who is firstborn, *primogenitus*, but he who is entitled to and enjoys all the rights, and has to fulfil all the duties, of a firstborn.

There is thus no difficulty in the words פָּקֹד כָּל בֶּכֶר פְּקֹדֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל “ Number all (those *regarded as*) firstborn of the children of Israel,”³ for those *only* are directed to be numbered here who had not lost their ministerial birthright by having been previously redeemed. If, on the other hand, the phrase פֶּטֶר רְחֵם had been here used, instead of בְּכוֹר, it is quite clear that by no process could a man once regarded as a firstborn, cease to be so regarded afterwards ; but no such phrase is anywhere used with reference

¹ 1 Chron. v. 1, 2.

² Deut. xxi. 16.

³ Numb. iii. 40.

to the *numbering*. The phrase פֶּטֶר יָרָם occurs only twice in connection with the substitution of the Levites for the firstborn;¹ and there it was absolutely necessary to use it; for not only was the case of the בְּכוֹרִים (those firstborns already consecrated to God's service) altered by the elevation of the Levites to the holy ministry, but the position of all *primogeniti* was changed, for thenceforth they were to become the property of the priests.

To sum up, then :—All who were ransomed before the edict required no further redemption; for they were in a similar position to that of the 273 who had to pay the five shekels, except that in their case the five shekels had been paid some time before. Of the 22,273 who had not been previously ransomed, 22,000 were exchanged for, and redeemed by, an equal number of Levites who stepped in their places, while the balance of 273 were redeemed by the money payment. The number ransomed before the edict might have been, and probably was, very large; and, if so, the 22,273 exchanged for the Levites, or redeemed by the money payment, would not in any way represent the absolute number of *primogeniti*; and so Dr. Colenso's difficulty would altogether vanish.

¹ Numb. iii. 12, and viii. 16.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SOJOURNING OF THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT.

WE agree fully with the views expressed by Dr. Colenso in this chapter. He finds that the words, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years,"¹ cannot refer to the actual residence of Jacob and his descendants in Egypt, but to the entire sojourning of them and their forefathers, Abraham and Isaac, "in a strange land."

In this view, there is involved neither difficulty nor discrepancy, nor, indeed, anything that militates against the historical character of the Bible. The conclusion arrived at, centuries ago, by numerous Hebrew commentators, is, that the 430 years date from God's covenant with Abraham.

¹ Exod. xii. 40.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EXODUS IN THE FOURTH GENERATION.

TAKING, as a starting point, the words of God's promise to Abraham, "the fourth generation (of Abraham's descendants) shall come hither again,"¹ Dr. Colenso attempts to show that only three generations intervened from the migration into Egypt till the exodus. His ultimate object is to prove that it would be utterly impossible for the Israelites, who numbered only seventy souls at the immigration, to have increased at the exodus to two millions. Certainly, such an increase, within three generations would be impossible.

We shall, however, see that many more generations intervened, and that the increase was no more than consistent with the words of the Bible itself.

The promise that the fourth *generation* of Abraham's descendants should return to Canaan cannot be interpreted by the meaning we now ascribe to the word "generation." Dr. Benisch has shown admirably² that the word דור, translated "generation," must have a more

¹ Gen. xv. 16. Erroneously translated, "in the fourth generation they shall come hither again."

² "The Pentateuch Critically Examined," page 128. He quotes Exod. i. 6, as an example.

extended signification than the mere interval between the birth of a father and the birth of a son, the modern meaning of the word. He tells us, very justly, that it means primarily, "the space or period within which a number of persons live, or all those persons who are contemporaries, from the eldest to the youngest." Thus the דֹּר, or "generation" of Joseph, might include the whole period from his birth till the death of his youngest contemporary.

We do not mean to assert that, in this particular instance the word דֹּר *must* be, but that it *may* be, held to have such a signification. Perhaps, our word "age" approaches most nearly to the meaning of the word דֹּר. We speak of the Augustan age, without limiting the period to any specific number of years. And so the דֹּר רְבִיעִי, or "fourth generation," in the case before us, may well mean a fourth series of descendants, each series occupying more than 100 years.

In Gen. vii. 1, where God tells Noah, "Thee have I seen righteous before me in this *generation*," the word "generation" (דֹּר) clearly means "age"; for we know that in those days of remarkable longevity there must have been many generations, or successive sets of descendants comprised in the phrase; and we know also from the context, and from the facts which followed, that God's denunciation of that generation (דֹּר) applied to all mankind then living.

So, too, in Judges ii. 10, where we read that "all that generation were gathered unto their fathers," it is quite clear, from the context, that the word "generation" in-

cludes the whole of Joshua's contemporaries, and even those "that outlived Joshua."¹

Jeremiah (ii. 31) says to his people, "O generation, see ye the word of the Lord." Surely, he does not confine his remarks to a single set of descendants, but applies them to all his contemporaries.

It is quite clear, from these and many similar passages, that no information as to time could be conveyed by the word דֹר "generation," if we attribute to it the meaning we at present ascribe to the word. Everything would depend upon the age at which the members of the successive generations begat children ; and we know that in this matter there was a great disparity in ancient times.

It will further be seen that there is no attempt at anything like arithmetical precision in the promise to Abraham. In part of this promise,² the sojourning in the strange land, or the period of affliction, is foretold as 400 years, while in Exod. xii. 40, we read that the precise number of years was 430.

We shall have occasion, in treating of the number of the Israelites at the time of the exodus,³ to revert to the argument used by Dr. Colenso in this chapter, and more especially to point out that the table of genealogies given by him, in pages 96 and 97, is most fallacious and imperfect. It is sufficient for our present purpose to have shown that the prophecy of the return of the דֹר רְבִיעִי "fourth generation," does not at all affect the question of the number of successive generations which intervened between the immigration and the exodus.

¹ Judg. ii. 7.

² Gen. xv. 13.

³ Chap. xvii.

CHAPTERS XVII., XVIII., XIX.

THE NUMBER OF ISRAELITES AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS.

THE DANITES AND LEVITES AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS.

REPLIES TO KURTZ, HENGSTENBERG, AND OTHERS.

THE object of Dr. Colenso in these three chapters is to show, generally, that the 70 souls who went down to Egypt could not possibly have increased in 215 years to two millions of souls; that the descendants of Dan (whom he alleges to have had only one son) could not possibly have multiplied to such an extent as to have produced 62,700 adult males in 215 years; and that, in the like time, it would be utterly impossible for the male adult descendants of Levi to have attained so prodigious a number as 22,000.

We consider these chapters the most important in Dr. Colenso's work. The facts are laid before the reader in so simple and easy a guise, that he is likely to adopt the author's views, with scarcely, an effort of reasoning or thought. It will be our task, in this chapter, to expose the utter fallacy of Dr. Colenso's premises, and to show that the numerical results, which at first startle us by their magnitude, are not only consistent with, but actually consequent upon, the admitted facts of the Pentateuch Narrative.

As many of our arguments apply equally to all the three chapters XVII., XVIII., and XIX., we include them in one group for the sake of convenience.

The difficulties raised by Dr. Colenso in these three chapters resolve themselves into two points—(1) the rate of increase ; (2) the number of generations.

As to the rate of increase, Dr. Colenso surprises his readers by telling them that “we have no reason whatever, from the data furnished by the sacred books themselves, to assume that they (the Israelites) had families materially larger than those of the present day.”¹

We will let the Bible answer for itself. It tells us that “the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them.”² It tells us, further, that the increase of the Israelites was so great that the king of Egypt declared, in alarm, they “are more and mightier than we;”³ and that this fact induced the king to persecute them. And, lest we might naturally conclude that their growth was checked by this oppression, the text takes care to inform us that “the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.”⁴

Later in the narrative, where Moses recounts to the children of Israel the great and unmistakable evidences of God’s special protection, he says, “He is thy God that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen. Thy fathers went down into Egypt

¹ § 116.

² Exod. i. 7.

³ Exod. i. 9.

⁴ Exod. i. 12.

with threescore and ten persons, and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude."¹

So far, then, from the Bible being silent as to the rapidity of increase of the descendants of Jacob in Egypt, it insists upon the fact as a special act of Providence. Let us, however, so far anticipate by stating that, in calling to aid an exceptional state of things to account for the rapid rate of increase, we shall not draw upon the credulity of the reader by asking him to believe that each individual had an average of 80 children.² We shall ask him to believe that the families were somewhat beyond the modern average, but yet limited to moderate dimensions.

Dr. Colenso, however, appeals to some recorded instances where genealogies are actually given in the Bible, and endeavours to prove therefrom that those families were not remarkably large, and hence infers that those not recorded could not be larger.

Let us, in the first place, examine his genealogical tables and catalogues of children. He gives us but three. First, the children of Jacob's sons, who went down to Egypt, as enumerated in Gen. xlv., from which he concludes that the numbers there given do not afford a larger average than modern experience would allow. He says that it is certainly strange that only two females should have been enumerated among 69 of Jacob's descendants who migrated with him to Egypt, forgetting that there might have been many more females who did not migrate, having been married in Canaan.

¹ Deut. x. 21, 22.

² COLENSO, § 125.

Then he quotes the list in Exod. vi., which he clearly considers to be a complete catalogue of the family of Levi up to the time of Moses, although (as we shall presently show) it is evidently an incomplete genealogy, having for its sole object to trace the parentage of Moses and Aaron.

Further, he gives the family roll of Numb. xxvi., which may be considered as forming, in a rough manner, no more than a repetition of the list in Gen. xlv.

Upon these slender genealogical *data*, Dr. Colenso founds the whole of his arguments.

Now, we deny, altogether, that the genealogical tables of the Bible have the meaning which Dr. Colenso assigns to them. They were never intended to record *all* the members of each family. As a rule, only those children were mentioned who held, at the time, distinguished positions; and when the names of all were recorded, it was quite exceptional. Nor must we be misled by the apparently explicit words, "these are the *generations* of," which precede many of the genealogical lists. In all cases where these words occur the leading idea is history, not genealogy. In many cases, historical narrative only is implied by them, as in Gen. vi. 9, where the words, "These are the generations of Noah," are followed, not by a list of his children, but, by a narrative of Noah's life. So, too, in Gen. xxxvii., we read similarly, "These are the generations of Jacob," and, instead of a list of his children, we find an account of his favourite son, Joseph.

It requires no profound research to show that the genealogical lists of the Bible are not, and never were intended to be, complete tables.

We find in the genealogies only two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, and a superficial reader might infer that Joseph had no more children. But we know the contrary ; for we find that Jacob tells Joseph, “And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine, as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And *thy issue, which thou hast begotten¹ after them*, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.”² From this it is evident that Joseph had more children besides the two enumerated ; but they were not mentioned, because they were called “after the name of their brethren.”

In all probability, the same must have been the case with all the sons of Jacob. At the time of the migration to Egypt, Joseph was only 39 years old ; so Reuben, the eldest brother, could not have been more than 45. It is barely possible that all the sons of Jacob, who came down to Egypt in the very prime of manhood, and lived to a good old age in the highest prosperity, could have had no more children after their arrival in Egypt.

Now, if they had children in Egypt, all Dr. Colenso’s calculations fall to the ground. Suppose that they had as many children after, as they had before, the migration, a supposition fully warranted by the assertion of Holy Writ.³ Then, instead of 54 being the number of the second generation from Jacob, there would be 108, and

¹ The English version renders הוֹלִידָתָהּ, “which thou begettest.” But this is manifestly wrong ; for הוֹלִידָתָהּ is clearly in the past tense.

² Gen. lxviii. 5, 6.

³ Exod. i. 7.

the rate of increase, instead of being $4\frac{1}{2}$ ($4\frac{1}{2}$, as Dr. Colenso maintains), would be $\frac{108}{12} = 9$.

The point here at issue is so important, that it may be well to pursue the investigation further, to show how our conclusions are warranted by other well admitted facts.

In the genealogies given in Exod. vi. 14—25, we read, "These be the heads of their fathers' houses;" and then follow *all* the names of Reuben's, Simeon's, and Levi's sons, which are enumerated in Gen. xli., thereby plainly indicating that their names are mentioned because they were *heads of families*. So, too, we find, in Exod. vi. 16, "And these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations," לְהוֹלִידָתָם, i.e., according to their historical importance. But even this seemingly complete genealogical table is, in reality, very incomplete, as may be instanced by the following important omissions:—

(1.) Although the names of Korah's children are mentioned (v. 24), those of Moses' children are omitted; yet we know that Moses had children already.¹ It is certain, also, that they were yet alive, for we find them spoken of afterwards.² Probably, Korah's sons were already men of some importance, while the sons of Moses were still of tender age. But, whatever the cause of the omission, there yet remains the important fact, that the children of the great hero of the exodus are omitted in the genealogical record.

(2.) Not a word about Miriam is said in the genealogy. We read, "And Amram took him Jochebed, his father's sister to wife, and she bare him Aaron and Moses."³ We

¹ Exod. ii. 22.

² Exod. xviii. 3, 4.

³ Exod. vi. 20.

know that Miriam was much older than Moses, for she watched over him when he was an infant. It is difficult to account for such an omission; but, unquestionably, the name of Miriam, a sister of the great hero, a prophetess, and a woman who evidently exercised some influence upon the nation, is omitted.

(3.) In the same genealogical table, the names of Kohath's grandchildren are enumerated, but not of all. The children of his son, Hebron, are not named, and yet we know that he must have had issue, for we read in Numb. iii. 19, 27, among the great Levitical stock "of Kohath the family of the Hebronites." If Hebron was the head of a considerable family at the time of the census, one year after the exodus, he must have been already the father of some children at the time referred to in Exod. vi.

A similar remarkable omission occurs in the genealogies of Numb. iii. 1—4. We read, "These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses, in the day that the Lord spake with Moses in Mount Sinai," but we do not find a word about Moses' children, though we know that they were then living.¹

Again, in Numb. xxvi., the genealogies of all the tribes appear to be given. Now, in verse 20, we observe Pharez himself forming a family of Pharzites; and in verse 21, his sons Hezron and Hamul form two families, the Hezronites and the Hamulites. This indicates that Pharez had children besides Hezron and Hamul. The other children, not being distinguished, were called after

¹ 1 Chron. xxiii. 14—17, and xxvi. 24—26.

their father, "sons of Pharez," and their descendants Pharezites; while these two, being for some reasons distinguished, were called by their own names, Hezron and Hamul, and their descendants Hezronites and Hamulites. The same may be observed in verses 29—32. Machir establishes a family, the Machirites; his son Gilead, *the only son mentioned*, not only establishes for himself the family of Gileadites, but begets children who establish families. This, again, indicates that Machir had many children besides Gilead, who were called "sons of Machir," and whose descendants were "the Machirites;" and, indeed, in 1 Chron. vii. 16, two other sons of Machir are mentioned, named Peresh and Sheresh. The like remarks apply to Gilead. The children specially mentioned formed distinct families; the others were named Gileadites. So, too, in Numb. xxvi. verse 35, the Shuthelhites are described as a family; and in verse 36, we read that Eran, son of Shuthelah, formed a separate family, the Eranites. Consequently, Shuthelah must have had more children, who were called after his name, while his son Eran founded a separate family.¹

If we compare the list of the families of the Levites in Numb. xxvi. 58, 59, with that in Numb. iii. 17—20, we shall find remarkable differences. The families of Shimei, Amram, Izhar, and Uzziel, are omitted, while that of the Korathites is added. Moreover, here (v. 59) Miriam is mentioned. This is satisfactorily explained by our hypothesis.

¹ This argument is used in a treatise written by Solomon ben Adereth, in reply to a Mahomedan Colenso of the 13th century, published recently by Dr. PERLES "B. Salomo ben Abraham ben Adereth, sein Leben und seine Schriften." Breslau, 1862.

Inasmuch as the family of Shimei had, through some cause, no longer retained its distinctive position, it lost its distinctive appellation, and is therefore here considered as part of the Gershonites. Similarly, Uzziel is now included under the Kohathites. Again, the descendants of Moses, not being conspicuous, are not specially designated, but are included in the generic term of Kohathites. The sons of Korah, on the other hand, being distinguished, and Korah himself having attracted much attention by his rebellion, all the Izharites are now called Korathites. Miriam is also now mentioned, probably because she had become a distinguished character.

We have thus shown that the genealogical tables give no data for producing an estimate of the number of children born of the respective parents. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that Jacob's sons had no more children than those enumerated. It was not the writer's object to describe the *number* of their progeny.

To sum up our arguments upon this head—When we consider (1), that the ages of Jacob's sons, at the time of the migration, were such that they probably had children after that date ; (2), that such additional progeny is distinctly alluded to by Jacob, in Gen. xlviii. 5, 6 ; (3), that the genealogical records were not intended to be complete records of every individual ; (4), that Exod. i. 7, tells us of an extraordinary increase ;—we cannot but conclude that the number of the original stock—the grandchildren of Jacob—was far greater than that which Dr. Colenso would make the Bible declare, and that the rate of increase was far beyond the modern average.

We proceed, next, to consider the number of genera-

tions which intervened between the migration into Egypt and the exodus.

According to general statistics, about thirty years is the period assigned to a generation. In 210 years there would thus be *seven* generations. Let us then see whether there is anything in Scripture to prove that in the particular case before us—the interval between the migration and the exodus—there was any material departure from this rule of general statistics.

First, let us examine Dr. Colenso's data. He actually traces *eleven* genealogies, which he confesses to be *all* he can trace. Here they are! Let us see what they show us.

	1st Gen.	2nd Gen.	3rd Gen.	4th Gen.	5th Gen.	
Levi . .	Kohath	Amram	Moses	. . .	. . .	E. vi. 16, 18, 20
Levi . .	Kohath	Amram	Aaron	. . .	. . .	E. vi. 16, 18, 20
Levi . .	Kohath	Uzziel	Mishael	. . .	. . .	Lev. x. 4.
Levi . .	Kohath	Uzziel	Elzaphan	. . .	. . .	Lev. x. 4.
Levi . .	Kohath	Izhar	Korah	. . .	. . .	N. xvi. 1.
Reuben .	Pallu	Eliab	Dathan	. . .	. . .	N. xxvi. 7-9.
Reuben .	Pallu	Eliab	Abiram	. . .	. . .	N. xxvi. 7-9.
Zarah .	Zabdi	Carmi	Achan	. . .	. . .	Jos. vii. 1.
Pharez .	Hezron	Ram	Amminadab	Nahshon	. . .	Ruth iv. 18, 19.
Pharez .	Hezron	Segub	Jair	. . .	. . .	1 Ch. ii. 21, 22.
Pharez .	Hezron	Caleb	Hur	Uri	Bezaleel	1 Ch. ii. 18-20.

Of these eleven, there is a column seven strong¹ in the third generation from Jacob's sons, four in the fourth,² two in the fifth³ (Nahshon and Uri), one in the sixth⁴ (Bezaleel).

¹ Moses, Aaron, Mishael, Elzaphan, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The four others belong properly to the fourth generation.

² Achan, Amminadab, Hur, and Jair, were in the fourth generation from Judah.

³ Called above, the fourth generation.

⁴ Called above, the fifth generation.

Fancy any one attempting to establish a rule for a *whole nation* from eleven examples taken at hazard, and those chosen examples *not eleven independent instances*. Even if there were no indications of something exceptional in the examples so taken, it would be most unwarrantable to generalize from such slender data, and still more unwarrantable to establish thence a conclusion opposed to general statistics, common experience and common sense. And when it shall have been shown that these examples are quite exceptional, it will be admitted that to derive therefrom a general rule, would be absurd to the last degree.

Taking the first examples, we know that Moses and Aaron were eighty and eighty-three years old, respectively, at the time of the exodus. Men of that age usually have adult children and grandchildren, so that, even in their case, *five* generations, instead of *three*, must be considered to have elapsed at the exodus. Indeed, we know that this was the fact in the case of Aaron; for Aaron had a grandson, Phinehas, at the time of the exodus. Secondly, Dr. Colenso admits (pp. 93—95) that Kohath must have been very old when his eldest son Amram was born, and consequently still older when his younger children, Uzziel and Izhar, were born. Indeed, reckoning 210 years as the term of the actual sojourn in Egypt, Moses must have been born at the end of 130 years from the migration.¹ Amram, then, must have been born when Kohath (who was, at least, an infant at the migration, being mentioned among those who went

¹ For he was eighty years old at the time of the exodus.

down with Jacob to Egypt) was far advanced in life. Say, then, that Kohath was sixty-five when Amram was born, and Amram sixty-five when Moses was born. Can any one pretend that such exceptional cases fairly represent the average? It will further be seen that *five* out of Dr. Colenso's *seven* cases of the third generation are those of the children of Kohath, who has been proved to have been a remarkable exception.

Let us now take the two remaining examples of the third generation, Dathan and Abiram. It is quite evident that they must have been very old at the exodus. For when Reuben came to Egypt, Pallu was already born. A period of 210 years between Pallu, Eliab and Abiram, gives an average of seventy to each; *i.e.* Pallu would be seventy when Eliab was born, Eliab would be seventy when Abiram was born, and Abiram would be seventy at the exodus, old enough to have sons and grandsons. But even if he had issue, must not the case of Pallu and his descendants be considered the exception, and not the rule?

Altogether, then, we have eleven cases, out of which seven are evidently exceptional.

We note, incidentally, that in Exod. vi. 24, Korah (one of the exceptional seven) is stated to have had sons, and that these sons were already called the *families* of the Korhites, implying that each of the sons was a father of a family. Also Hur, who seems to have been a companion of Aaron and Moses,¹ had a grandchild Bezaleel,²

¹ Exod. xvii. 10, xxiv. 14.

² Exod. xxxi. 2.

who was an adult at the exodus, for he was entrusted with the very responsible post of superintending the construction of the tabernacle. This Bezaleel is admitted to have been of the sixth generation from Judah,¹ and Joshua is mentioned as being of the ninth from Ephraim,² or tenth from Joseph. Probably, Joshua was an exception the other way.

Remembering that the sacred writer's object was not the mention of the number of generations, but merely the mention of those who became persons of note, it is but natural that such few examples, taken at hazard, should present remarkable exceptions.

To sum up, there is nothing in the names produced, to justify the conclusion that, with the general bulk of the population, there was a departure from the average number of generations within the period, viz. *seven*.

Arguing, then, from our conclusions, that there were more grandchildren of Jacob than those enumerated; that the rate of increase was beyond the modern average; and that the average number of generations was seven; let us see how easily there may have been two millions of Israelites—men, women, and children,—existing at the time of the exodus.

Commencing with Jacob's twelve sons, and taking the rate of increase as ten only—(a number certainly above the average, but not extravagantly so, considering the Scriptural authority for admitting an extraordinary rate),

¹ We have also Joseph, Manasseh, Machir, Gilead, Hepher, Zelophahad, daughters of Zelophahad, Numb. xxvii. 1.

² 1 Chron. vii. 20—27.

we have to multiply each successive generation by 10, and since one half of each may be supposed to be males, and the other half females, we must divide each result (except the last) by two ; then we have—

Jacob's sons 12					
1st generation	$12 \times 10 =$	120	} Male and Female.	=	60 couples
2nd generation	$60 \times 10 =$	600		=	300 "
3rd generation	$300 \times 10 =$	3,000		=	1,500 "
4th generation	$1,500 \times 10 =$	15,000		=	7,500 "
5th generation	$7,500 \times 10 =$	75,000		=	37,500 "
6th generation	$37,500 \times 10 =$	375,000		=	187,500 "
7th generation	$187,500 \times 10 =$	1,875,000			

The seventh generation, by itself, thus exhibits a population of nearly two millions, and as we may fairly presume that the bulk of the sixth generation, and even a portion of the fifth, were alive at the time of the exodus, we should have a total population far exceeding two millions, the number which the Bible narrative requires.

It will be seen that the above calculation is made upon the most moderate suppositions. We have made no extra allowance for marriages with women of other nations, as we know was the case with Judah, Simeon, Joseph, Moses, and Mered ; no allowance for polygamy ; and no allowance for the fact that an *average number of generations* yields a result *far below* an average between the results of the highest and lowest number.

In illustration of this last point, which is of some importance, we may remind the reader, that, although the number of generations which we have taken (7) is an arithmetic mean between the lowest and highest (4 and 10,

the cases of Eleazar and Joshua), yet, when the same rate of increase is applied to the two extremes, and to the mean (say, for example, 2) the result of successive multiplication on the mean (1×2^7), does not give anything approaching the arithmetic mean of the two results of successive multiplication on the two extremes (*viz.* 1×2^4 and 1×2^{10}). The result of the *arithmetic* mean is, in fact, the *geometric* mean between the two results on the extremes.

To see how seriously this question of averages affects the point at issue, let us take a case. Let us suppose that Ephraim and each of his descendants down to Joshua (who was in the ninth generation from Ephraim) had ten children; then the issue of this *single one* of Jacob's grandsons would amount, in the ninth generation (that of Joshua), to $[1 \times (\frac{10}{2})^8 \times 10, \text{ i.e. to } 3,906,250]$. In other words, less than *one seventieth* part of the producing power *might* have yielded a population *twice as large as the whole producing power is required to have yielded* according to the Bible narrative. It will thus be clearly seen, (1) that the rapid increase of one family would more than counterbalance the slow increase of another; (2) that a greater number of generations in one tribe would much more than counterbalance a smaller number in another.

We have taken the example of Joshua and his progenitors as an extreme case; but we must not overlook the fact that Dr. Colenso doubts our right to avail ourselves, at all, of this case. After quoting the genealogy of Joshua as given in 1 Chron. vii. 20—27, as follows:—
 “Joshua, the son of Nun, the son of Elishama, the son

of Ammihud, the son of Laadan, the son of Tahan, the son of Telah, the son of Rephah, the son of Beriah, the son of Ephraim," he remarks:—"that is to say, Joshua is given in the *ninth* generation from Ephraim, or the *tenth* from Joseph." And he considers this genealogy to be false for the following reasons:—

"(1) This is an exception to the rule, which prevails *universally*¹ in the Pentateuch.

"(2) We are not here concerned with the books of Chronicles, but with the narrative in the Pentateuch itself and Book of Joshua, and must abide by the data which they furnish.

"(3) The book of Chronicles itself exhibits the rule of the Pentateuch in other cases."

In other words, Dr. Colenso does not believe the genealogy of Joshua given in Chronicles, (1) because it would be an exception to a rule which he has deduced from four examples; (2) because he is writing about the Pentateuch and Book of Joshua, not about Chronicles, and therefore discredits the chronicler, or, at least, does not care what he has to say; (3) because the chronicler generally agrees with Dr. Colenso's so called rule² of the Pentateuch.

Such reasons are, perhaps, unique in the whole range of criticism.

But the stern sense of critical justice, which bids us remember that "we are not here concerned with the Books of Chronicles," does not prevent the critic from

¹ We have seen that this *universal* rule means the rule derived from the four cases into which all his genealogies resolve themselves.

² The rule of four.

doing his best to undermine the evidence of the chronicler by the following attack :—

“Let us now,” says Dr. Colenso, “examine more closely this statement in the book of Chronicles.

“Since Joseph ‘saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation,’ Gen. l. 23, Telah, one of these, may have been born about seventy years after the migration into Egypt (110).

“We have no express statement of the age of Joshua at the time of the Exodus. But we may suppose it to have been about the same as that of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, with whom he is so often coupled ; and Caleb was forty years old, when sent to spy the land at the end of the first year after the Exodus. Josh. xiv. 7. We may, therefore, adopt the estimate of JOSEPHUS, *Ant.* v. l. 29, who reckons the age of Joshua as *forty-five* at the time of the Exodus. This will agree well with the fact, that, shortly after leaving Egypt, while still young enough to be the ‘minister’ or servant of Moses, Exod. xxiv. 13, he was old enough also to command the host of Israel in the fight against Amalek, Ex. xvii. 9, 10.

“Hence, since the Exodus took place 215 years at most after the migration into Egypt, there must have intervened between the birth of Telah and that of Joshua 215—70—45, that is, 100 years ; so that, according to the chronicler, there must have been six complete generations in 100 years, which is hardly credible.

“Again, according to the chronicler, ‘Elishama, the son of Ammi-hud,’ was the grandfather of Joshua. But ‘Elishama, the son of Ammihud,’ was himself the captain of the host of Ephraim, Num. ii. 18, about a year after his *grandson*, Joshua, had commanded the whole Hebrew force which fought with Amalek, Ex. xvii. 8—16, which also is hardly credible.”

Now it will be evident, at a glance, that Dr. Colenso’s statement consists of a mere string of assumptions.

- (1) He assumes that Telah *may* have been born about seventy years after the migration, but the fact is, he *may* have been born sixty-five years after the migration.
- (2) He assumes that Joshua was forty-five years of age

at the time of the exodus, merely because Caleb was nearly forty years old at that time, and Caleb and Joshua are usually spoken of together; but Joshua *might* have been only twenty years old at that time, and still have been old enough to command the host of Israel.¹ (3) From the two first assumptions he concludes that one hundred years only were left for six whole generations. Now, six whole generations *might* be produced in one hundred years; but we have shown that there may have been a much longer time than one hundred years left for these six generations; for if Telah, one of Ephraim's great-grandchildren, had been born sixty-five years after the migration (seventy-five years after Joseph's marriage), and if Joshua were only twenty years old at the exodus, we should have $215-65-20=130$ years for the remaining six generations,—much more than sufficient.² And thus the whole attack upon the chronicler is based upon assumptions which have not even the air of probability.

Dr. Colenso further attempts to cast ridicule upon the chronicler by making him assert that "Ephraim himself, after the slaughter by the men of Gath, of his descendants in the *seventh* generation 'mourned many days,' and then married again, and had a son, Beriah, who was the *ancestor of Joshua*." This absurdity he deduces from 1 Chron. vii. 20—22, which we will quote:—"And the sons of Ephraim; Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah his son,

¹ David was not twenty when he killed Goliath.

² See our remarks in Chap. II.

and Tahath his son, and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him."

Now first be it observed, that Ezer and Elead *are not* described at all as the sons of the second Shuthelah. If they had been his sons, the text of verse 21 would have been, "And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead *his sons*." But there is no mention of such relationship between Ezer and Elead and the second Shuthelah. On the other hand, in verse 22, Ephraim is described as "their father." Hence we conclude that Ezer and Elead were *sons* of Ephraim, not descendants in the seventh generation. The genealogy from Bered to the second Shuthelah would thus be parenthetical only, describing merely the descendants of the first Shuthelah. Such a parenthetical genealogy we remark elsewhere, as in 1 Chron. vii. 6—12, where we find first three of Benjamin's sons, then their descendants, and then (verse 12) the list of Benjamin's sons resumed. Reading, then, the genealogy of Ephraim without this parenthesis, it would be: "And the sons of Ephraim, Shuthelah; and Ezer and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew." We can then well account for Ephraim being described as "their father," and need not wonder at his mourning for their death.

The text, therefore, neither favours nor even permits the absurd rendering which Dr. Colenso would attribute to the chronicler.

Dr. Colenso also finds a difficulty in believing the statement of the chronicler that Elishama was captain of a tribe, a year after his grandson Joshua commanded the whole Hebrew force. But there is really no difficulty involved in this, other than of Dr. Colenso's own creation. Such a coincidence is just as possible as the parallel one (for which we have the authority of the Pentateuch), of Hur assisting Moses and Aaron, while his grandson, Bezaleel, who was filled with the spirit of God in wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, was constructing the tabernacle.¹

One word more with respect to the "chronicler;" Dr. Colenso rejects or accepts his authority, according as it suits his argument or not. Thus, in one place (§158), he contemptuously refuses to believe in his assertions, while in another (§159) he actually quotes from him in support of his own views. This mode of proceeding sufficiently indicates the spirit of his criticism. Justice would say: if the book of Chronicles be an authority on one side, it must be held of equal authority on the other.

The difficulty raised by Dr. Colenso as to the number of Danites and Levites at the time of the exodus (chap. xviii.), is fully cleared up by our reply to his objections as to the number of the Israelites generally. He cannot understand how the one son of Dan, Hushim, could have been the ancestor of all the 62,700 Danites, numbered just after the exodus; and how the three sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, could

¹ Exod. xxxi. 1—4.

have been the ancestors of all the 22,000 Levites, numbered at the first census. We have already shown that, with respect to the nation generally, there may have been more progenitors than those enumerated as having been brought down into Egypt, and many more generations than allowed by Dr. Colenso; and the same argument, which applies to the general population, of course applies to the particular tribes.

With respect to the increase of the tribe of Levi between the first and second census—a period of thirty-eight years,—Dr. Colenso points out what he calls “a great inconsistency,” *viz.*, that the increase of the numbers of that tribe was only 1,000 in that period, while the other tribes increased to a much greater extent: further, that the population of England increases at the rate of about 23 per cent. in ten years, and that, therefore, the Levites “should have increased by more than 26,000 in the thirty-eight years.”

It is remarkable how cleverly modern statistics are drawn into the question when they favour the attack, and how sedulously they are concealed when they favour the defence. Why not allude to the statistics of the French population, which would exhibit a very different result, showing a decrease rather than an increase? In truth, modern statistics of a particular race are of little use in such cases as this; for equally good statistical evidence might be adduced on both sides. But we are at a loss to conceive what constitutes the “great inconsistency” in the small increase of the tribe of Levi. We might as well call it a great inconsistency that one man should have twelve children, and another only one

child. We might call the small increase of the Levites a strange fact, but it is certainly no inconsistency. And a glance at the peculiar condition of the tribe will show us that it is even scarcely a strange fact.

For the Levites, who ministered in the sanctuary, were obliged, during the time of their service, to keep away from all causes of uncleanness.¹ Now, in the Bible, one of the causes of uncleanness is, that which is essential to increase of population; and this abstinence from all occasions of uncleanness, which could render them unfit for their office, must have produced a vast difference in the number of their progeny.

We also find, that the Levites were specially subject to supernatural deaths in consequence of an irreverent or careless ministration. We would refer, in proof of this assertion, (1) to Numb. iv. 17—20, where a special provision is made for the protection of the Kohathites from such violent deaths; (2) to Lev. x. 1, 2, where even the two sons of Aaron die through deviating from the prescribed ritual; (3) to 1 Sam. vi. 19, where we find 50,070 of the men of Beth-shemesh die by the hand of God, "because they looked into the ark of the Lord."² The Bible sufficiently indicates, in these passages, that proximity to the holy things was attended with great danger, and this circumstance, added to that first detailed, will sufficiently account for a comparatively small increase of the Levitical population.

¹ Lev. xv.

² See also 2 Sam. vi. 7.

CHAPTER XX.

THE NUMBER OF PRIESTS AT THE EXODUS COMPARED WITH
THEIR DUTIES AND WITH THE PROVISION MADE FOR
THEM.

THE objection urged by Dr. Colenso, in this chapter, is to the following effect:—How could the *three* priests, Aaron and his two sons, discharge all the duties connected with the immense number of offerings? “The single work of offering the double sacrifice for women after childbirth must have utterly overpowered three priests, though engaged without cessation from morning to night.”

We dispute, entirely, Dr. Colenso’s premises : (1) We deny that there were only three priests ; (2) We also deny that the sacrificial system was in full operation during the wanderings in the wilderness.

Dr. Colenso asks, “How many priests were there?” and replies, “The answer is very simple. There were only three,—Aaron (till his death), and his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar.” But this is a most unwarrantable assertion. He is not even correct in alleging that these are the only priests mentioned in the Pentateuch, for there was Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, who is repeatedly mentioned. There is, moreover, every reason to

suppose that both Eleazar and Ithamar had several sons. Of the other sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Scripture tells us that they had no children, and we might fairly infer, from the mention of this fact, that the remaining sons of Aaron *had* children. The absence of names from the genealogical list proves nothing, as we have already shown. Aaron was eighty-two years of age at the time of the exodus, and might well have had, at that time, not only several grand-children, but also a large number of adult great grand-children old enough to be priests.

At the conclusion of the chapter, Dr. Colenso expresses his astonishment at so many as thirteen cities having been assigned to the descendants of Aaron, the whole number of such descendants being so small. But it will be seen at once that these cities were not necessarily intended for the priests to live in, but that they may have served as a source of revenue. When we read in Thucydides¹ that Artaxerxes assigned three cities to Themistocles, we should not suppose that the hero actually occupied these three towns, but merely that he derived an income therefrom, by letting the houses and adjacent lands.

We have now to consider how the sacrifices were performed, during the period of the forty years' wanderings. That the sacrificial laws were not intended to come into positive operation as obligatory laws, until after our ancestors had arrived in Palestine, is evident from a great number of facts which we shall presently adduce. In the wilderness, the sacrificial laws were intended to have the

¹ Lib. I., C. 138.

effect of weaning our ancestors from sacrificing to idols. The only rule solemnly laid down, and enforced by the penalty of death, was, that no one should sacrifice to any other Deity except the Lord, or in any other place except the Tabernacle. No individual was compelled to bring any offering; and even the congregation were only commanded to bring a daily offering of one lamb in the morning and one in the evening.

Let us examine the position of the sacrificial laws in the Pentateuch. The system of sacrifices, and the laws of purification, extend from the beginning of the 1st to the end of the 16th chapter of Leviticus. After the completion of all these details, the 17th chapter solemnly and positively lays down, as it were, the one great object of the whole sacrificial system. It prohibits, under pain of death, the slaughtering or offering up of any sacrifice at any other spot except the tabernacle; the purpose of the command being, "That they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto *devils*, after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations."¹

This indicates that what the Almighty especially desired was, not so much the offering of sacrifices on His altar, as the abstaining from offering them to false gods. That this was the main principle is rendered clearer by the following chapter (the 18th), which first generally prohibits the doings of the lands of Egypt and Canaan, and then specifies incest, adultery, and other abominations; as if to say,—Behold the result of idolatrous

¹ Lev. xvii. 7.

worship, and think not that the punishment I award to those who sacrifice to demons is needlessly severe; think not that the superstitious practices of the Egyptians were harmless follies; for see how they led to all kinds of abomination.

The only public sacrifices which appear to have been enjoined to be carried out in the wilderness were: (1) the daily offering (Exod. xxix. 38—42), consisting of a lamb in the morning and a lamb in the afternoon; (2) the sacrifice on the day of atonement, consisting of one bull, two rams, and two goats.

In Numb. xxvii, the approach of Moses' death and the appointment of Joshua are mentioned. In Numb. xxviii. and xxix., the command for the additional offerings is given. It is remarkable that in Levit. xxiii. a list of the festivals is given, just as in Numb. xxviii., xxix., but with this difference, that in Leviticus it is merely ordained in each instance, "Ye shall offer an offering by fire unto the Lord."

There is, however, one exception only, viz., the offering of the sheaf, of the first-fruits, and the accompanying lamb, which were only to be brought, "when ye be come into the land which I give unto you and shall reap the harvest thereof."¹

In Numbers xxviii. and xxix., when the Israelites were approaching Palestine, a long list of sacrifices is, in each instance, given. It is evident from this, that in the wilderness it was not considered obligatory to offer all the sacrifices; in fact, no number of sacrifices was prescribed

¹ Lev. xxiii. 10.

for the festivals only; but an additional offering was implied. With regard to personal sacrifices, we read in Deuteronomy, "*Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.* For ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety. Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring *all that I command you*; your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offerings of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord."¹

These words clearly indicate that *all the sacrifices commanded* were not then obligatory, and were indeed not practised. At various periods of Bible history, the Israelites fell into the error of supposing that the mere offering of sacrifice, though unaccompanied by rectitude of conduct, would be pleasing to God. The prophet is then commanded by the Almighty to reprove the people, and in various forms to proclaim, "that to obey is better than sacrifice;" that sacrifice is only acceptable when it is a token of devotion, a humble expression of penitence or gratitude.

Of this, we have numerous examples, in Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets. Two of these allude to sacrifices in the wilderness, in language which

¹ Deut. xii. 8—11.

strongly confirms our position. Jeremiah says: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel. Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out from the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."¹ In Amos, also, we read, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offering of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?"²

These passages assert clearly, (1) that the Israelites were not *commanded* to offer sacrifices in the wilderness; (2) that they actually did not offer them. Dr. Colenso assumes from this passage in Amos that sacrifices were expected. This is but an assumption, and the context certainly bears quite an opposite construction. But, in any case, the passage distinctly asserts this fact—that the sacrifices were actually not offered during the wanderings. To sum up, then, we conclude that the numerous offer-

¹ Jer. vii. 21—23.

² Amos v. 21—25.

ings ordained in Leviticus were actually not brought during the wanderings of the Israelites. It was necessary to give these sacrificial laws when and where they were given, in order to complete a system of religious discipline which was to wean the nation from idolatry. To a people who had beheld all sorts of abominations practised in the name of religion, there was a simple grandeur in the system of propitiation, which needed, for its formal part, but the sprinkling of a few drops of the blood of an innocent animal.

Moreover, the whole practice of blood-sacrifice was calculated to make life a more sacred thing in the estimation of the people. In the East, in those times as in ours, life was held of small value. Surely a law which would enjoin that the slaughter even of a beast should be accompanied by a simple religious rite—itself an acknowledgment that all life comes from God—would induce a greater respect for human life, and a less disposition to deeds of violence and blood.

The great aim and end of the sacrificial system, as indeed of all other ceremonial ordinances of the Mosaic code, was to spiritualise the every-day acts of every-day life.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PRIESTS AND THEIR DUTIES AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER.

THE objection raised in this chapter is—how could three priests manage to sprinkle the blood of 150,000 lambs in two hours, and how could all the lambs have been killed in the court of the tabernacle?

Not one of the three assertions embodied in the question is founded on fact.

It must be remembered that there is mention of only one paschal celebration in the wilderness,—*viz.*, in the second year of the exodus.¹

We have already shown² that the estimate of 150,000 lambs must be considered a gross exaggeration. The Talmud tells us that the Passover rite was considered as duly performed if each male partook of a piece of the sacrifice as large as an olive; and the number of lambs sacrificed need not thus have been very large, even though all were qualified to partake of it.

But how does Dr. Colenso know that there were only two hours in which to perform all the duties of sprink-

¹ Numb. ix. 5.

² Chap. X.

ling the blood? The expression בֵּין הָעֶרְבָיִם is explained by most of the Jewish commentators as embracing the period between the first decline of the sun (immediately after noon) to the actual sunset. The interval would give four or five hours at least. Again, how are we to know that the lambs were slain in the court of the tabernacle, as Dr. Colenso would wish the Bible to assert? He thinks that the Bible states this, because, according to the Chronicles, at the Passover of Josiah and Hezekiah, "the lambs were manifestly killed in the court of the temple."¹ But surely the court of the temple in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah bears no analogy to the court of the tabernacle in the wilderness, which was merely a temporary structure. Moreover, an examination of the text of the Chronicles xxx. 15, 16, will distinctly show that the blood which the priests sprinkled was the blood of the *burnt-offerings*, not of the paschal lamb.

So the whole fabric of the difficulty raised by Dr. Colenso falls to the ground. (1) We know there were more than three priests. (2) We know that 150,000 lambs were not sacrificed. (3) We know the lambs need not have been killed in the court of the tabernacle.

But we will go further. We maintain that Scripture does not tell us that, at the celebration of the Passover in the wilderness, the priests officiated at all. We are simply told that "they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at even, in the wilderness of Sinai, according to all that the Lord

¹ 2 Chron. xxxv.

commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.”¹ Now, previously to this time, the paschal ordinances had been only given in two places,—at the exodus,² and among the sacrificial laws.³ The paschal ordinances, as given in Exod. xii., make no allusion to any priestly intervention. Indeed, the priest’s office was not then established. And, if we look further, and examine the sacrificial laws of the feast of Passover, as detailed in Lev. xxiii., we find there is no mention of the paschal lamb among the priest’s duties appertaining to that festival. We read there of “an offering made by fire unto the Lord.” And we read of the sheaf of first-fruits which was to be offered by the priests with a he-lamb for a burnt-offering, fine flour mingled with oil as a meat-offering, and wine as a drink-offering; but not a word is said of any priestly duty relating to the paschal lamb. Tradition tells us that at a later period, during the existence of the temple, the rite of sprinkling the blood of the paschal lamb was performed by the priests.

¹ Numb. ix. 5.

² Exod. xii.

³ Lev. xxiii.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WAR ON MIDIAN.

THIS chapter embraces several objections. The critic first calls attention to the enormous figures with which the Scripture history deals, more especially the immense numbers of men represented to have been slain in the battles recorded in Holy Writ. He compares these gigantic figures with the number of 4,172 allies, slain at the battle of Waterloo. We can only reply to this, that the battle of Waterloo must have been a comparatively bloodless victory, especially when we consider its important results.

But the truth is that the loss of life in a battle bears no proportion to the importance of the result. The two have no connexion. Weber relates¹ that at the battle of Preussich Eylau—a battle of which, perhaps, few Englishmen have heard—there were 60,000 killed and wounded.

Indeed, now-a-days, a decisive battle is not one in which there is great carnage, but one in which a great position is held or gained; in which the loser loses not men but *morale*; in which he is panic-stricken, and

¹ "Weltgeschichte," p. 379.

seeks safety in flight. In such cases, the victorious army will pursue, but, unlike the warriors of old, they will not pursue to the edge of the sword. They will have mercy upon the wounded, and only pursue the vanquished so far as necessity requires. Happily, wars of extermination are rare in modern times. Hence the vast difference between the numbers of victims of ancient and modern wars.

Still, we must not under-rate the numbers of those who fall in modern warfare. It must have struck everyone that the returns of the killed and wounded in the American civil war are frightfully large. We may also recollect the lamentable fact that one million lives were lost in the Crimean war.¹

The war on Midian was essentially a war of extermination. Its professed object was the utter annihilation of the Midianite race, and we need not therefore be surprised at the number of those who fell. Certainly, it was a most wonderful circumstance that, in this war not a single Israelite lost his life; and this can only be accounted for by the miraculous interposition of God.²

We shall resume this subject presently.

¹ Kinglake, p. 5.

² We are well aware of Dr. Colenso's antipathy to the accounting for circumstances in the Biblical narrative by the agency of miracles. But in Exod. xxiii. 20, we are expressly told that God's angel would go before the Israelites to keep them in the way, and bring them to their destination; he would cut off the different nations. God's fear would go before them to destroy all the people to whom they would come, and the hornets would be sent before them to drive their enemies out. Surely all this must have taken place by the

The Bishop, in conclusion, attempts to prove the incredibility of the Pentateuch narrative by alleging that more events than could possibly have happened are crowded together in the short interval between the death of Aaron and the parting address of Moses, which forms the substance of Deuteronomy. We propose to prove that all those events could have happened in the time in which the Pentateuch represents them to have happened.¹

I. We are told that Aaron died on the 1st day of the 5th month, in the 40th year of the wanderings, and the Israelites mourned for him a month.

II. While at Mount Hor, the battle with the Canaanite, King Arad, took place. Dr. Colenso says, "After this [the thirty days mourning for Aaron], King Arad, the Canaanite, fought against Israel," but it will be observed that Scripture says nothing about the attack of King Arad being *after* the period of mourning. It might have been immediately after the death of Aaron. This even might thus have taken place in the 5th month.

III. Dr. Colenso allows a *fortnight* for the journey from Mount Hor to compass the land of Edom, and

IV. A month for the succeeding nine encampments.

miraculous interposition of God. We are fully justified, then, in assuming a miracle in this case.

But does not history present to us many examples of bloodless victories?

Napoleon, without any loss to himself, captured at Ulm, with 22,000 of his own men, above 30,000 Austrians. (THIERS, Book XXII., 30. BECKER'S Weltgeschichte, XIII., p. 234.)

¹ COLENSO, § 173.

We allow these assumptions, and thus these events would bring us to the middle of the 7th month.

V. The capture of the cities of the Amorites in Heshbon would, according to Dr. Colenso, have occupied another month. If we allow this also, we shall be carried down to the middle of the 8th month.

VI. The capture of the cities of the Amorites in Jaazer would, in all probability, have taken place at the same time as the conquest previously recorded. It seems to have been part of the same military operation. Dr. Colenso inserts the words, "after that," between each detail of the conquest, as if two military operations could not be carried on at the same time.

VII. For the battle with Og, and the conquest of Bashan, we allow, as Dr. Colenso does, another month. This brings us to the middle of the 9th month.

But Dr. Colenso makes this last event bring him down to the first day of the eleventh month, the very day on which Moses addressed the people in the plains of Moab; and then he asks, "What room is there for the other events which are recorded in the book of Numbers as having occurred between the conquest of Bashan and the address of Moses, viz. :

- (1) The march forward to the plain of Moab, xxii. 1.
- (2) The affair of Balak and Balaam, xxii. xxiv.
- (3) Israel's abiding in Shittim, xxv. 1—3.
- (4) The plague, xxv. 9.
- (5) The second census, xxvi.
- (6) The war in Midian, xxxi.?"

We have already shown that Dr. Colenso proceeds too fast by six weeks. And now we would call attention

to the fact that he stops short five weeks too early. For the Pentateuch does not state that all these events, including the war in Midian, took place before Moses *began* to address the children of Israel in the land of Moab, *i.e.*, *before* the first day of the eleventh month. There are no grounds for believing that Moses delivered his address continuously, commencing on that date; but rather, that he delivered it at intervals, and that during the intervals between the several parts of his address many of the events took place. The words of Deut. i. 3, 4, confirm this view; for they give the exact date when Moses began his address, and then tell us that it was "after he had slain Sihon . . . and Og," plainly indicating that the events subsequent to the death of Sihon and Og took place *after* the commencement of Moses' address, *i.e.*, after the first day of the eleventh month.

Now, Moses died on the seventh day of the twelfth month,¹ so that there intervened between the commencement of his address, and his death, five weeks. This period, added to the six weeks' margin left before the first day of the eleventh month, would give eleven weeks for the march to Moab, the prophecies of Balaam, the stay at Shittim, the plague, the census, and the war upon Midian, which would certainly be quite sufficient time.

We know that the war upon Midian must have been immediately prior to Moses' death; for we read in Numb.

¹ Compare Deut. xxxiv. 8, Josh. i. 11, and Josh. iv. 19.

xxxi. 1, 2, that God thus addressed Moses: "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites, afterwards shalt thou be gathered unto thy people."

The whole difficulty arising from the crowding of events thus vanishes. We must certainly admit that the conquests were rapid, and that events fell thickly; but, it was but a foretaste of the rapid march of conquest, which was to signalize the entrance into the Promised Land.

We have combated the figures adduced by Dr. Colenso in this remarkable chapter, and now quit the region of dry numerals to criticize our critic in the realms of sentiment.

The war on Midian horrifies Dr. Colenso. The terrible details of the slaughter of *all* the males in battle, and of the subsequent butchery in cold blood, by command of Moses, of all the women and children, except the virgins, arouse in the sensitive mind of our critic the feeling that the history is too horrible to be true. He tells us that the slaughter of these women and children (estimated at 68,000), is such a terrible affair that the tragedy of Cawnpore would sink into insignificance when compared with it. Then he reminds us of the Lord's tribute of slaves—thirty-two persons reserved from the human spoil—and, forgetting that the Lord's tribute of slaves would certainly not remain slaves, asks how is it possible, with such a fact, to quote the Bible as in any way condemning slavery?

Let us first straightforwardly admit that the details of this war are terrible indeed. No man, with his heart in the right place, can read such a narrative without a

shudder. And, be it further admitted that this narrative is not an isolated instance of wholesale massacre, in which the Israelites were the executioners. It was part of the mission of God's chosen people to be the exterminators of the people of Canaan. They were to wage a ruthless and unpitying war of extermination;¹ and woe to him who showed mercy! Pity for the king of the Amalekites cost Saul his crown and his life. The divine *fiat* had gone forth,—the race of sinning Canaanites was to be utterly destroyed. The measure of their iniquity was full.

Almost every historical book of the Bible teems with commands for such wars of extermination, or with the details of their execution. We cannot discredit the facts without throwing aside the entire Book as worthless; and Dr. Colenso himself would not do this. These terrible facts are so interwoven in the substance of the Bible narrative that they must be true, if there be a word of truth anywhere. The historical books teem with the details, the Law insists upon the performance of the terrible work, the Psalmist and the Prophets glory in these deeds, as an act of Divine retribution.

How then can we reconcile such deeds with our ideas of the infinite mercy of the Infinite God?

Truly, a difficult problem. But if we might be permitted, with all reverence, to lift up a corner of that veil which covers the workings of Providence in the government of this world, we might possibly discern the most refined mercy in all this apparent cruelty.

¹ Deut. vii. 16.

We see a large flock of sheep, and, among them, a certain number stricken with a terrible disease, so loathsome, and so infectious, that, for the sake of the sufferers, and for the sake of those which are sound, it is a mercy to slay the poor afflicted brutes. The shepherd would gladly spare their lives; but he hesitates not; he slays the diseased sheep, and thus stays the plague amongst his flock. A child passes by—sees the blood flow—knows nothing of the cause—and cries out in pity, “How can that shepherd be so cruel?” But still the shepherd is right.

May it not be the same with that terrible war of extermination which God caused the Israelites to wage against the people of Canaan? We know the Canaanites were sunk into the very depth of degradation. But we know not the full extent of their sins. There must have been pollution in everything they touched; for we read that Moses ordered all the spoil of Midian to be destroyed, except such things as could pass through the fire, and thus be purified. There are mental and moral diseases as loathsome and as infectious as any which affect the body. May it not have been even an act of supreme mercy that God, by a terrible act of extermination, prevented the evil from increasing and spreading till the whole world became a mass of corruption? And shall the child of earth stand by, and, seeing the blood flow, ask the Great Shepherd of the universe, how He can be so cruel, as if any could love His flock with a holier love than He?

And if, after all, we cannot reconcile such dreadful facts with our ideas, innate or taught, of the Creator's

mercy; if all our speculations fail to find an answer to our doubts—what then? Shall we say, the facts are false? Is *this* the only problem in the book of Divine revelation? Is not the book of nature, too, full of problems no less difficult? Why do the tiger and the serpent live? Their life is death to hundreds. What means the dread volcano vomiting its molten lava on a world of life, and making it a heap of dust and ashes? What mean the crippled form, the idiot brain, the thousand forms of suffering in the world? All are problems greater, far greater, than the war on Midian.

And yet, who, looking at nature, will doubt the Greatness, the Goodness, the Supreme Mercy of God? There is enough in the revelation of nature, enough in the revelation of the Bible, to make us stand amazed at the boundless Mercy of our Creator; and the clouds, which here and there terrify us, may one day be removed, discovering to our admiring gaze the fulness of the Creator's love, which no mortal can fully appreciate.

Till then, let us humbly imitate the first missionary that the world beheld—let us imitate Abraham, the faithful and the just; and when, like him, we see extermination which our mortal eyes cannot reconcile with mercy, let us, like him, exclaim—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"¹

END.

¹ Gen. xviii. 25.

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